

A NEGLECTED ERA

EDITH ROSS BRALEY

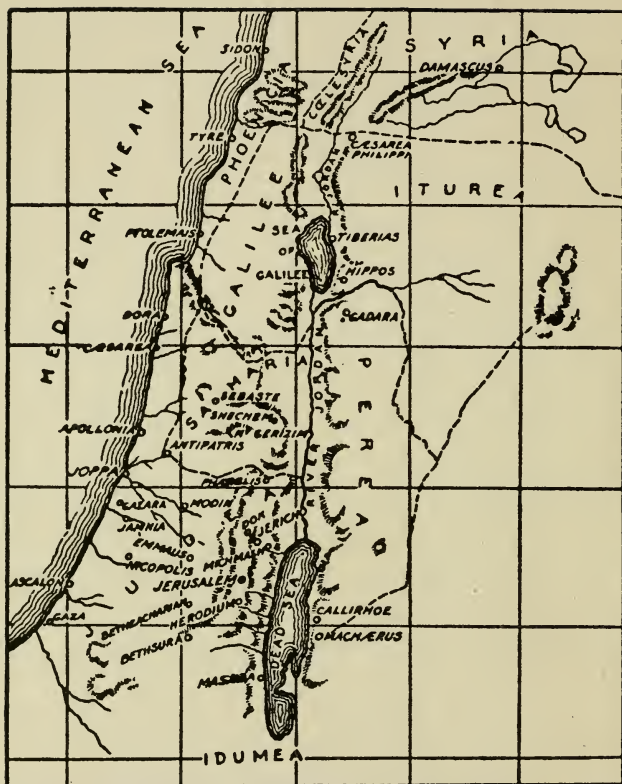
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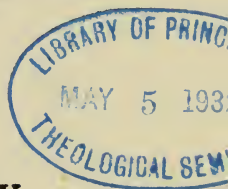
PALESTINE DURING THE GREEK AND ROMAN PERIOD

A NEGLECTED ERA

From the Old Testament to the New

BY ✓

EDITH ROSS BRALEY



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TO MY FORMER PASTOR
PAUL DWIGHT MOODY
THIS BOOK
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

Several years ago, when I attempted to lead a group of women in the study of the period between the Testaments, we found ourselves handicapped by the want of an adequate textbook. The interest of the class was enthusiastic and the study seemed so well worth time and effort that at the request of the members of the class and other friends, I have ventured to assemble in one volume the information which made the period interesting and illuminating to us, and have dared to hope that it might be of use to other teachers and other classes.

History, legend, and comment gleaned from the pages of the following works proved invaluable assistance and I am much indebted to their authors: I wish also to acknowledge my indebtedness to Rev. Paul D. Moody without whose encouragement and friendly criticism the book would never have been completed.

History of the People of Israel,
Carl Heinrich Cornill, PH.D., D. D.

PREFACE

History of Israel,

George Heinrich von Ewald.

History of the Jewish Church,

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D. D.

Dean of Westminster

The Jewish People in the Time of Christ.

Emil Schurer.

*Historical Connection Between the Old and
New Testaments,*

Principal J. Skinner, M. A., D. D.

Life and Times of the Messiah,

Alfred Edersheim, PH.D., D. D.

Hours with the Bible,

John Cunningham Geikie, D. D., L.L.D.

Life of Christ,

Cannon F. W. Farrar, D. D., F. R. S.

The Modern Reader's Bible,

Richard G. Moulton, M. A., PH.D.

A Brief History of Our English Bible,

Rev. Paul D. Moody.

The Prophets as Statesmen and Preachers,

Henry T. Fowler, PH.D.

Dictionary of the Bible,

James Hastings, D. D.

A Commentary on The Holy Bible,

Rev. J. R. Dummelow, M. A.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION		I
PART I. THE PERSIAN PERIOD		
538-333 B. C.		
CHAPTER		
I. EZRA AND NEHEMIAH		9
The reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. The foundation of legalism and exclusiveness.		
PART II. THE GREEK PERIOD		
333-160 B. C.		
II. THE ORIGIN OF HELLENISM		25
Alexander the Great's Conquest of Syria. First traces of Hellenism. Life and philosophy of Socrates.		
III. THE RULE OF THE PTOLEMIES		37
Jews in Alexandria. The synagogue and the yearly tribute. Power and character of the high priest. Literary activity of the period.		
IV. THE PERSECUTION		50
Palestine tributary to the Seleucids. Antiochus Epiphanes. The persecution and the revolt under Mattathias Maccabeus.		
V. JUDAS MACCABEUS		66
His remarkable victories. His rededication of the temple. His defeat and death. His treaty with Rome.		
PART III. THE ROMAN PERIOD.		
160 B. C.-70 A. D.		
VI. JUDEA AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM UNDER THE ASMONEAN MONARCHS		89
Jonathan and Simon Maccabeus. Treaty with Rome		

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
renewed. John Hyrcanus. The Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Jews and the Samaritans. The decadence of the Asmonean monarch.	
VII. THE RIVAL CLAIMANTS FOR THE JEWISH THRONE	108
Civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. The intervention of Pompey. Loss of Jewish independence.	
VIII. HEROD THE GREAT	123
His early life. His appointment as King of the Jews by the Roman Senate. His marriage. Execution of his wife and children. Policy of his reign. His public works. The temple of Herod.	
PART IV. DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ERA	
IX. THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND THE TALMUD	153
X. SCHOOL AND SYNAGOGUE	165
XI. THE ABSURDITIES OF LEGALISM	180
XII. THE SCRIBES, THE PHARISEES, THE SADDUCEES AND THE ESSENES	196
XIII. HELLENISM AND JUDAISM	213
Hellenism in Palestine. Judaism in Alexandria. Aristobulus and Philo.	
XIV. THE JEWS AND THE ROMANS	230
The sons of Herod the Great. Judea under Roman procurators. The war with Rome. The siege and destruction of Jerusalem.	
APPENDIX	257

MAPS

PALESTINE DURING THE GREEK AND ROMAN PERIODS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
JERUSALEM IN THE ROMAN PERIOD	<i>Facing Page 89</i>

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

When narrating his spiritual adventures in *Grace Abounding*, John Bunyan describes the mingled sensations of anxiety and peace brought to his orthodox soul by the perusal of lines for which he vainly sought between the covers of his Bible. "Look at the generations of old and see; did any ever trust in the Lord, and was confounded?" "Then I continued," he says, "above a year and could not find the place; but at last, casting my eyes upon the Apocrypha books, I found it in the tenth verse of the second chapter of Ecclesiasticus. This at first did somewhat daunt me because it was not in those texts which we call holy or canonical. Yet as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take comfort of it, and I bless God for that word, for it was of good to me. That word doth still oft-times shine before my face."

The Bible student approaches the study of the four centuries of Jewish history immediately preceding the birth of Jesus Christ with alternate feelings of doubt and confidence not un-

like those which John Bunyan experienced when he found his favorite text upon the pages of the Apocrypha. He is assailed by doubt because the Hebrew literature of the period was rejected by the makers of the Old Testament Canon as inferior from both a literary and spiritual point of view, and, with the exception of Daniel, Ecclesiastes, and a few psalms, assigned by modern scholars to the Maccabean age, it has found no place in the Bible. This acknowledged inferiority of Apocryphal literature, an expression of the moral decadence of the age in which it was written, is not reassuring to the seeker for mental and spiritual food, and he cannot fail to question whether with a wide field of Bible literature open for exploration, his limited time should be spent in the study of a period when the voice of prophecy was silent and the Jewish people looked for God, not in the whispered warnings of the inner voice or the better impulses of the heart, but in the petty restrictions of an over-elaborated law and the wild and superstitious inventions of their Rabbis. Yet he may find restored confidence in the opinion of many wise men who believe that the criticism awakened by these "hidden" books might be applied with equal justice to certain portions of the accepted books of the Canon. Added reassurance comes with an examination of the neg-

lected literature, for even a desultory reading reveals the threads of gold which cross its soiled and blood-stained fabric; detached passages here and there of as fine a spiritual quality as that which shone upon John Bunyan's pathway, and stories of the wonderful faith and devotion of Jewish martyrs who lived and died for their religion.

But the chief benefit to be derived from the study of the Jewish history occurring between the Old and New Testament periods is the light which it sheds upon the conditions among which Christ lived and worked, and the Apocryphal books are valuable principally for the historical information which they contain concerning this period. During these intervening centuries, great changes took place in world-history. It witnessed events of no less importance than the fall of the Persian empire, the spread of Greek civilization in the Orient, and the subjugation of the great body of the nations by the Romans. Judaism could not emerge from four centuries of strife, persecution and contact with Greek and Roman civilization unchanged, and the Jews of the New Testament are in many respects a very different people from the Jews of the Old. Greek culture, with its double current of good and evil, entered the Orient with Alexander the Great, and in spite of the persecution and dread-

ful conflict occasioned by the intruder, Jewish civilization was permanently broadened and deepened by its pervasive influence. Roman despotism compressed to fanaticism the extravagant zeal of an already bigoted people, and even the heavy hand of the mistress of the world could not prevent the disastrous outburst of their seething discontent. Greek philosophy and Roman law left their impress upon Jewish life and Jewish religion, but the most marked distinction between the peoples of the two periods was produced by no outside force, but was inherent in the Jewish religion itself. This change was produced by the growth of legalism and formalism.

In the fifth century before Christ, the problem by which the leading men of the Jewish nation were confronted was: will Judaism have sufficient stamina to weather the disintegrating forces with which it must come in contact? With the future safety of their religion in mind, the Hebrew reformers of the period erected for its protection a cast-iron framework of law and form. So imposing and pretentious was the defence that it overshadowed and concealed the tender plant for whose protection it had been erected, and the nurture of that pure and spiritual religion preached by Isaiah and Jeremiah was neglected and forgotten, while the protecting framework became the object of most zeal-

ous care. Storms of opposition and persecution served only to prove its temper and strengthen its persistency. Each succeeding generation contributed reinforcements and grotesque additions of complicated detail until the structure attained a size so monstrous and a shape of such bewildering intricacy that it would never have been recognized by its originators as the outcome of their comparatively modest foundation. With the tendency to make the shell of prime importance rather than the kernel which it contained, came the inevitable result, the substitution of the letter for the spirit of the law, of ritual for righteousness. But, although externalism flourished and the religion of the changed heart became a dry and withered thing, the labors of those who built the artificial bulwark were not entirely vain, for beneath its shade in the time of Christ, there still survived the root from which Christianity was to spring. By this root, Christianity and Judaism were so closely affiliated that but for its existence, the whole course of divine revelation must have run in a different channel. Subjected to the blessed influence of Christ's life and work, it became the most vital force for good which the world has ever known, and we owe its survival to that observance of law and form which bound the Jews so closely to their past and to each other.

PART I

THE PERSIAN PERIOD. 538—333 B. C.

CHAPTER I

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

Ezra and Nehemiah were the reformers who laid the corner-stone of legalism. Scripture tells us that Ezra was a priest of the house of Aaron and "a ready scribe in the law of Moses," that he had "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments," a description which combined with subsequent events, produces for us a mental picture of his early manhood, and we imagine him always poring over the sacred scrolls in the law school at Babylon, a stern and uncompromising figure, the sharp angles of his asceticism still untouched by the friction of a pleasure-loving world.

The narrative is silent concerning Nehemiah's parentage, and it is evident that his beauty and winning personality rather than his lineage had made him an inmate of the Persian court, where as the favorite of Artaxerxes and his queen, he had obtained the lucrative position of royal cup-bearer. Seldom have such unselfish

consecration, fiery enthusiasm, tireless energy, and patriotic persistency as Nehemiah's been embodied in one man, and to the gifts bestowed on him by nature were added the worldly wisdom, the knowledge of men and affairs acquired in the Persian court.

Probably two men more distinctly different in character and ability could not have been found among the prominent Jews of the Babylonian colony, yet because deep in the heart of both rested the same love and hate, hope and fear, they were destined to tread the same path and together to lift a heavy load of indifference and doubt from the hearts of their countrymen at Jerusalem, a burden which the very diversity of their attainments fitted them to share.

Like all other Jewish patriots, they looked for that golden age long promised by their prophets, when the heathen nations by whom they had been persecuted and oppressed should bow in fear before them; but they had witnessed the dissolution of many small nations upon return from captivity, and they feared lest before the coming of that joyous day, the Jewish remnant, enfeebled by exile, might be utterly lost, merged in the ocean of heathendom by which it was tossed to and fro. The germ of Jewish individuality must be planted upon its native soil, nurtured, and above

all, isolated and barricaded from entangling and destructive foreign influences. No sacrifices were too great or hardships too severe to be endured for the preservation of Jewish individuality and Jewish religion, but the world-wide love of humanity preached by the great prophet of the exile was unknown to these Jewish reformers. With every faculty alert for the spiritual welfare of their countrymen, they were wholly deaf and blind to their heathen neighbors' need of Jehovah and hated them as fervently as they loved their God and their religion.

Before Ezra and Nehemiah began their work, the discipline of the captivity had left its impress upon the Jewish people. Like children surfeited with sweets, they no longer cared for idolatry when they were constantly surrounded by it, and after seventy years of captivity, became for all time a monotheistic people. Daily contact with the strength of their conquerors had convinced them of their own weakness, and the futility of political ambition for themselves. They renounced all thought of political independence and were content to exist as a religious sect, their one hope faithfulness to the God who in return was to reward them with a great future.

In B. C. 537, when Cyrus, wishing to protect his kingdoms against the hostility of Egypt by establishing a friendly colony upon her northern

border, had given the captive Jews permission to return to their native land, many of them had recovered from their first homesickness and preferred the ease and prosperity of Babylon to the perils of the long journey to Jerusalem and the hardships of recolonizing a deserted land. In Babylon, they formed a community by themselves, and wealth and comfort had led to the building up of a Jewish culture and learning which could not possibly have been developed in the struggling colony at Jerusalem. There, too, a school for the study of the Mosaic law had sprung into existence, the dynamo where a theoretical Judaism was generated, the revivifying influence of which the Babylonian Jews longed to share with the colony at Jerusalem.

The exiles who had braved the difficulties of the return found a desolate and ruined city overrun by hostile heathen tribes. The great stones and charred timbers which blocked the streets of Jerusalem must be removed, homes must be built, a scanty subsistence must be wrested from the unproductive soil, and at the same time, the frequent attacks of hostile neighbors must be met and parried. The enthusiasm of the colonists was so impaired by poverty and the hard work to which they were unaccustomed, that seventeen years had passed before they attempted to rebuild their place of worship. Then under the

leadership of Haggai and Zechariah, a plain temple with scanty furniture was erected to replace the costly building of Solomon. The city was partially rebuilt, and life gradually became more normal. Goldsmiths, money-changers, and dealers in spice set up their booths in the streets; Tyrian fishermen came thither to find a market for their fish; and corn and fruit were borne on the backs of mules through the city; but the leveled walls, burned gates and clusters of ruined houses on the hill-sides were still reminders of the former desolation. Jerusalem was still open and defenceless against attack, and the glorious prophecies of the return were still unfulfilled. The bright hopes by which the colonists had been inspired faded into vague illusions; their own poverty and the comparative prosperity of their Samaritan neighbors caused a disbelief in the justice and goodness of God, and skepticism and indifference became prevalent. The paying of tithes was neglected, blemished animals were offered as sacrifices, Jewish wives were divorced and heathen women were installed in their places.

The returned exiles were sadly in need of the restraint of a more stable government, and of the uplift and inspiration to be supplied by the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah.

A correspondence as frequent as the scanty

means of communication would permit, was carried on between the two colonies, and in B. C. 458, Ezra, bearing many costly gifts and a letter from Artaxerxes which gave him full authority to reform conditions in Judea, set out with seven hundred and seventy-two Jewish families to bring the message of the law to the colony at Jerusalem. The journey was commenced in April, but it was midsummer before the travellers reached their destination, where they were joyously received and sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered for their safe arrival.

Ezra had not been long in Jerusalem when he discovered that many of its most prominent citizens, including priests and Levites, had married heathen wives, and that these strangers were admitted to the intimacy of family worship and entrusted with the important task of rearing half-Jewish children. Such a transgression of the Mosaic law had been unknown in Babylon, where the Jews had little or no social intercourse with their heathen neighbors, and Ezra's grief and repugnance knew no bounds. He tore his hair and beard, rent his inner and outer garment, and sat motionless all day in the court of the temple. We can easily imagine the prestige of this wealthy Babylonian Jew among the poverty-stricken colonists of Jerusalem, and the tremendous influence exerted by his public display of

horror at their wickedness. The people gathered about him weeping, and when evening came, he began a long wailing speech, half-prayer, half-address, in which he attributed all the misfortunes and hardships of the past to their sin, and demanded not only the observance of the Mosaic law which prohibits marriage with foreigners, but added to it a requirement of his own, the immediate divorcement of all heathen wives. These strangers and their innocent children were to be turned adrift like Hagar and Ishmael, but without the loaf and water-skin, or the blessing of their husbands and fathers. The excitement which prevailed has been compared by Professor Cornill to the intense, but short-lived enthusiasm of a Methodist revival meeting. The people acknowledged their guilt and promised with fear and trembling to do all that Ezra desired, but when an assembly gathered three months later to consider the matter, the affair had assumed a different aspect. The claims of natural affection had reasserted themselves, and the prominent Jews who had married the daughters of native heathen magnates and Persian officials hesitated to incur the consequence of obeying Ezra's demands. They made excuses to delay the issue, pleading the inclemency of the weather and the imprudence of deciding so important a matter in one day or

two, and finally insisting that the whole affair be placed in the hands of a committee. The committee was appointed, but it is evident that it accomplished little beyond obtaining the long list of names with which Ezra's narrative ends, and that the annals of the next thirteen years were suppressed to conceal his chagrin and disappointment. He vanishes from the record, and we can only conjecture that he rebuilt the walls of the city and that his work was destroyed by the foreign potentates to whom his attempted reform had been most distasteful.

In B. C. 444, a band of Jewish travellers brought the sad news of the overthrown walls and frequent murders which occurred in the roads about Jerusalem to Nehemiah at the Persian court. 'Overcome with grief and anxiety, he obtained a twelve years' leave of absence from Artaxerxes, who also made him governor of Judea and gave him full authority to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He set out at once with his "firman," his royal guard, and retinue of slaves, and only three or four days after his arrival at Jerusalem, began his work. Nehemiah evidently took the hearts of his countrymen by storm. They could no more withstand his enthusiasm and generosity than they could escape his thorough and systematic vigilance. Every class of society was obliged to take part in the work,

and to each family was assigned the portion of the wall next its own dwelling. Thus every inhabitant might regard the part he had himself constructed as his own.

Obstacles only stimulated the energy and persistency of the new governor. When Sanballat, the Horonite, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, who had regarded the new-comer with envy and suspicion since the first day of his arrival, annoyed the builders by their threats and cunning devices, Nehemiah bade each man wear a sword while he worked, and stationed a trumpeter at his own side that all might gather about him should the alarm sound to summon assistance. Many times the Samaritans endeavored to mislead and entrap the resourceful governor, and each time he escaped, responding to their wily invitations with courteous sarcasm, telling them he was engaged in a great work which he was unable to leave.

When the poor who had given up their daily means of subsistence that they might join in the work, were cheated and oppressed by the rich money lenders, Nehemiah put the usurers to shame by refusing to accept any salary, and kept open house, entertaining one hundred and fifty guests at his own table daily, regaling them with dishes so choice that he dwells upon their enumeration with evident satisfaction.

Every day the builders labored from the rising of the sun till the stars appeared, and day and night, Nehemiah superintended the work, never once removing his clothes from the day the wall was commenced until the day of its completion. In spite of all hindrances, the work was accomplished in fifty-two days, and its dedication was celebrated amidst great rejoicing. Two long processions including men, women and children marched to the sound of trumpet and song around the city on the top of the newly-made fortification, and "the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off."

Faith and hope had been reawakened by devotion and self-sacrifice; the time was now ripe for the work which Ezra had been compelled to drop; and, just here, when the services of an efficient scribe were indispensable to the progress of the reform, he reappears in the narrative. We do not know how his years of seclusion had been spent, but it is possible that he had been revising his code of laws to meet the needs of the colony at Jerusalem, and his severity had doubtless been softened by his recent failure. The people gathered by the water gate and begged him to read the commands of God from his sacred scrolls. It was early in the morning when he mounted the wooden pulpit which had been prepared for him there, and until noon a

great congregation listened eagerly to his reading. In order that the law might be perfectly understood, Levites went to and fro among the assembled people, explaining each passage as soon as it had been read. When the members of the congregation wept because they had so often disobeyed the holy precepts, they were restrained by Ezra and Nehemiah, who told them it was not a time for mourning, but for rejoicing.

A few days later the feast of tabernacles was celebrated as the law prescribed, and each day of the feast, Ezra read to the people from the holy books. The twenty-fourth day of the same month was appointed as a day of general confession and repentance, and a vow to obey the law was signed and sealed by the heads of families. In a written covenant, they promised to abstain forevermore from marriages with foreigners, to observe the Sabbath and Sabbatical year, to pay tithes for the support of the temple worship, and to bring all the first fruits of their substance as an offering to the house of God.

The day on which this first "great assembly" was held has most appropriately been called the birthday of Judaism, and its far-reaching significance cannot be over-estimated, for it was then that the customs peculiar to the Jewish religion first became integral parts of Jewish life. The Shemoneh Esreh or eighteen benedictions, the

prayer which at a later date every Jewish man, woman and child was compelled by the oral tradition to repeat three times a day, owed its origin to this first great assembly, and from the stress laid by Ezra and Nehemiah upon the importance of a thorough knowledge of the Mosaic law, sprang the synagogue, the "bearer and banner" of Judaism. The foundation for barriers far more effective than city walls was thus laid, and behind this solid wall of separation, the religion from which Christianity was to spring, was protected from dissolution.

At first there was frequent backsliding, and during Nehemiah's absence in Persia, the law was boldly broken by those who should have been its most loyal supporters. Eliashib, the high priest, prepared a chamber for the Samaritan Tobiah within the precincts of the temple itself; the house of God was forsaken by the Levites and singers because tithes were no longer paid for their support; the Sabbath was desecrated, and mixed marriages were again contracted. Nehemiah's vigorous reforms on his return led to a further weeding out of the ranks. Tobiah's household furniture was ejected with violence from the temple, and the chamber was cleansed from the pollution of his contaminating presence. The gates of the city were closed at sunset on Friday, and until the evening of the following

Saturday, no foreign merchant was allowed to bring his wares within or even to linger outside the walls. The offending husbands of foreign wives received drastic treatment from the energetic governor. He flew at them, cursed them, pulled their hair, and made them solemnly swear that their sons and daughters should not follow their example.*

Manasseh, the son of the high priest Eliashib, was driven from the city because he had married Sanballat's daughter Nicaso, and would not give her up. With other discontented priests, he established a Samaritan worship, which led to the building of a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim where all who did not wish to keep the law established by Ezra and Nehemiah might worship God in the old-fashioned way.

The record of Nehemiah's last reforms closes the account of his public works and, as his book marks the end of Old Testament History, we must now begin to grope our way through that period of darkness and obscurity which is lighted by the scanty records of the Apocrypha.

* Dr. A. B. Davidson's summary of Ezra and Nehemiah characterizes the two men better than several pages of analysis and commentary. "Ezra tore his own hair, but Nehemiah tore the other fellow's hair."

PART II

THE GREEK PERIOD. 333—160 B. C.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN OF HELLENISM

An uneventful century of subjection to Persian rule, scarcely mentioned in Jewish annals, followed the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. At its close, the calm was broken by a wave of excitement, and the eyes of not only the Jewish nation, but of all Syria and Egypt, were turned toward Alexander the Great as he played his brief but brilliant part in the drama of history. The picture engraved upon Jewish hearts and minds by Alexander's conquests in Syria is reflected in the apocalyptic visions of Daniel, who beheld the youthful Macedonian as an Ionian goat leaping swiftly eastward with feet that hardly touched the ground, smiting with his one 'notable' horn and trampling beneath his virile feet the two-horned ram, symbol of the united kingdom of the Medes and the Persians; thus establishing a kingdom "strong as iron, forasmuch iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things."

In B. C. 333, the Persian empire was shattered

by the Greek victory of Issus, and Alexander marched down through Syria demanding the oath of allegiance from Persian provinces, subduing them sometimes by force, more often by the magic of his name. As Greek histories contain no record of his conquest in Judea, it is probable that the Jews passively accepted their transfer from Persian to Greek dominance; but Jewish tradition, unwilling to accept so prosaic a version of its country's part in the important crisis, repeats both in Josephus and in the Talmud a legendary account of the first meeting of Jew and Greek, which runs as follows:

When all Syria was lurid with the horrors of the siege of Tyre, Alexander sent messengers to Judea and Samaria to claim substantial proofs of their friendship, reinforcements and arms; and the Jews refused to comply with his demand, declaring that they would be faithful to the Persian king as long as he lived, but the servile Samaritans willingly accepted the conqueror as their sovereign and sent seven thousand soldiers to join his army. Angered by the disobedience of the Jews, Alexander marched with his army toward Jerusalem, guided by the eager Samaritans, who saw in the promised destruction of the holy city a long-sought revenge for Jewish insults. As they halted upon the heights of Mizpeh which overlook the city, a long pro-

cession, clad in white, issued from its gates. It was led by Jaddua, the high priest, dressed in the purple and scarlet robes of his office and wearing upon his head the miter bearing the gold plate upon which the name of Jehovah was engraved. The formal march continued all night to the sound of clashing cymbals before the procession reached the height upon which the Greek army was stationed. While his soldiers waited for the command to fall upon the long white line and destroy it, Alexander, to their amazement alighted from his chariot, advanced alone, and fell upon his knees before the Jewish leader. When asked why he, whom all men adored, bowed before the high priest, he replied that he worshipped not Jaddua, but the one true God, whose name was inscribed upon the priestly miter, explaining to Parmenio, his favorite general, alone, that years before in Dios of Macedonia, such a one in such a habit had appeared to him in a dream, foretelling his Persian and Egyptian victories, and urging him to cross the sea without delay.

Led by the venerable high priest, the youthful king entered the holy city, where he offered a sacrifice in accordance with Jaddua's direction, and beheld upon the sacred records Daniel's prophecy of his wonderful career. So pleasing did he find this proof of Jewish wisdom, that he

willingly granted to the multitude, even to such as wished to join his army, the privilege of observing the religious customs of their ancestors and freedom from tribute during the Sabbatical year, while the unfortunate Samaritan guides, delivered into the hands of their Jewish enemies, were fastened to the tails of horses and dragged through thorns and briars to the site of their temple on Mt. Gerizim.

A few substantial grains of truth rest beneath the elaborate embroidery of this tale, highly colored as it is by Jewish prejudice, for history tells us that the Samaritans rebelled against the conqueror and that he added a part of their territory to Judea; but the Jews cherished his memory with such reverence that the names of Solomon and Alexander became synonymous. It is also probably true that Alexander, who believed that God was the common father of all men, especially of the best men, worshipped the God of the Jews as he had worshipped the gods of other Syrian nations and granted the Israelites freedom from tribute during the Sabbatical year, hoping in this way to gain the deeper tribute which he most desired, the tribute of an admiration and affection which should find expression in the adoption of everything Greek.

For his conception of conquest was as daring as his military feats. With his keen and gifted

mind, he realized that a kingdom bound together by force would not provide him with the memorial which he wished to leave in the Orient. He conceived the idea of a vast empire bound together and controlled by a force more potent than the sword, the force of Greek civilization. The path of his army might be traced by Greek colonists who built cities with Greek names and Greek forms of government, by means of which he hoped to create on Syrian and Egyptian plains an atmosphere of Greek influence which should color and permeate Oriental life; to make the Greek language the medium of Oriental thought and to unite East and West in one great body, whose directing and inspiring spirit should be the culture of Greece. The character of this Greek influence which hand in hand with Alexander invaded the East, may be illumined by a backward glance at the philosophy of Socrates, in whose wisdom and nobility early Greek life found its climax.

The son of Sophroniscus, a poor sculptor, Socrates owed his education to the generosity of one of his father's patrons. His early years were spent in his father's shop, in Greek schools of culture, and in the Greek army where he more than once displayed a courage which won the admiration of his fellow soldiers. His fascinating conversation, not less than his bravery, made

him attractive to the young Athenians. Emerging from the long reveries in which he indulged, and from which nothing could rouse him, he would hold the youthful Greek nobles spellbound by the witchery of his tongue, so that even the elegant Alcibiades feared he might sit down beside him and grow old while listening to his words. In personal appearance, he was almost repulsive. His capacious mind and lofty spirit were humbly housed in the droll and ungainly body of a clown, the ugliness of which he accentuated by going barefoot and by wearing, summer and winter, the same soiled and worn old cloak. He himself is said to have claimed that his turn-up nose, bristling hair, and thick and curling upper lip were beautiful, because they pointed upward. As his jocose and satirical manner veiled the serious purpose of his teaching, so homely and practical illustrations concealed from careless eyes the beauty of the truths he uttered. With wayward passions and a high temper, but of an intensely religious nature, he listened ever to the divine voice or daimon, which he acknowledged as the guiding and restraining influence of his life, consulting it on all important occasions, and yielding implicit obedience to its whispered warnings. Guided by the divine voice, Socrates recognized in the declaration of the oracle of Delphi, who pronounced the son of

Sophroniscus the wisest of living men, a call to a life of unpaid and patient toil, and spent his middle and later years upon the streets of Athens, teaching young and old, and trying to rescue his native city from the materialism of the Sophists, who, thwarted in their speculations in regard to the origin of the universe, denied the existence of truth and found in the pursuit of wealth and pleasure the only goal of life. "Socrates instead of trying to account for the existence of the universe was ever craving for a light to show him his own path through it." He found the light he sought in the eternal realities of the inner life, virtue, courage and knowledge, and became a moralist and missionary as well as a philosopher. Knowing the potency in the world of moral conduct of the never-ending train of thought which rushes constantly through the minds of men, he confined his speculation to the nature of thought and its propellent, knowledge. So while Ezra and Nehemiah were erecting barriers to exclude all harmful foreign substances from the stream of Jewish life, Socrates, in Athens, was attempting to remove the mud and slime of ignorance from the source of the stream of life, believing that thought, clarified and rendered active by accurate knowledge, would swiftly find an outlet in virtue and good conduct.

For his philosophy made virtue and knowledge

inseparable; for example, it was his conviction that a knowledge of the evil results of self-indulgence would make men temperate, and that a knowledge of the immortality of the soul would lead men to endure all suffering and hardship of the body whose life is transient rather than mar the beauty of the spirit whose life is eternal. But men must do right because it was right, without thought of reward or punishment. He sought always to supply the wants of the soul rather than the wants of the body, and believed that the perception of outward justice, goodness and truth was dependent on the innate justice, goodness and truth of him who beheld.

To convince men that they saw fundamental truths blurred and distorted through the defective window of their own ignorance, and to lead them to look at life through the pure crystal of perfect knowledge, he employed his famous method of cross-examination, discarding books as able neither to ask questions or argue. If a bystander were so unfortunate as to consider his knowledge of any point infallible, Socrates, professing ignorance and with assumed innocence, asked him to define it, and soon pricked the bubble of his conceit by a series of clever questions which rendered both answer and him who answered ridiculous. He himself claimed to

be wise only in the knowledge of his own ignorance. Know thyself and thy limitations, was the maxim of his teaching.

But the eminent men whose ignorance he most often exposed could not fail to resent his ridicule. As Kleine well says, wherever a great soul gives utterance to its thoughts, there also is Golgotha. He was accused of introducing new gods and of corrupting the Athenian youth, was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. The severity of his sentence might have been mitigated, had he taken advantage of the privilege which Athenian law gave the accused, and suggested some lesser penalty like exile or imprisonment; but, with characteristic audacity, he declared that a public maintenance in the Prytaneum would be his most appropriate punishment, thus claiming the honor conferred only upon Athens' most distinguished citizens. The following extract from the defence of Socrates tells of a life lived in consistence with the principles he professed:

"Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting anyone whom I meet after my manner and convincing him, saying: 'O, my friend, why do

you who are a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens, care so much about laying up the greatest amount of money and honor and reputation and so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul which you never regard or heed at all?"

"And this I should say to everyone whom I meet, young and old, citizen and alien, but especially to the citizens, inasmuch as they are my brethern. For this is the command of God as I would have you know, and I believe that to this day no greater good has ever happened in the State than my service to God. For if you kill me, you will not easily find another like me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly given to the State by God, and the state is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions, owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has given to the State, and all day long and in all places, am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you."

Socrates' last hours were spent in prison, where he delivered marvellous addresses to his friends upon the immortality of the soul. Surrounded by his weeping disciples, he drank the fatal cup of hemlock with a smile, and cheer-

fully awaited his passage to that unknown world in which he confidently believed.

“Speak, History! Who are life’s victors? Unroll
thy long annals and say
Are they those whom the world called the victors—
who won the success of a day?
The martyrs or Nero? The Spartans who fell at
Thermopylae’s tryst
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates?
Pilate or Christ?”

The impulse given to ethical speculation by Socrates found a vent in the schools of Plato and Aristotle, but he effected no permanent reform and none of his followers reached his moral height. The path pointed out by him was too stern and steep for the feet of his laughter-worshipping, sun-loving countrymen; and many of them found an excuse for self-indulgence in the vague and elastic doctrine of Epicurus which excused men from all moral responsibility and taught them to find in the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain the chief end of life.

Spoiled by prosperity and enervated by Oriental luxury, Alexander the Great himself, although trained in his youth to self-restraint and endurance by his tutor, Aristotle, succumbed in later life to Epicureanism. He died the victim of his own uncontrolled passions at the age of thir-

ty-three, and his body was borne from Babylon to its last resting-place at Alexandria. He is well characterized by Pope as the youth who all things save himself subdued.

CHAPTER III

THE RULE OF THE PTOLEMIES

The great empire of Alexander fell with the hand that had created it, and the four parts into which it was broken became the possession not of the best, as he had wished, but of the strongest who survived him. Syria was seized by Seleucus, and Egypt by Ptolemy Lagus, a general in Alexander's army; Palestine occupying an important and exposed position between the two great powers, not unlike that of Belgium in the recent European war, was the coveted possession of both. For twenty years it was the bone of contention over which the greedy Ptolemies and Seleucids wrangled, but the year B. C. 301, when it became the undisputed property of Egypt, marked the beginning of one of the most peaceful and prosperous eras of its existence.

The new Greco-Macedonian rulers granted the Jews especial favors, partly on account of their important political position and partly because they were superior, both in culture and stability of character, to the other small nations of Syria and Egypt. Jews settling in Alexandria

were granted "isopolity" or rights of citizenship equal to those enjoyed by the Greeks and Macedonians; and Hebrews colonists in Antioch, the new capital of Syria, were accorded the same privilege. In Antioch, a payment of oil went with this right of citizenship, but as the Jews refused to accept it on account of the heathen rites used in its preparation, its value was made up to them in money.

Attracted by commercial advantages, and the friendly disposition of the new sovereigns, Jewish pioneers were soon living side by side with Greeks in the cities founded by Alexander, and the fusion of which he had dreamed was gradually taking place. Among these cities, the one which bore the name of its founder and followed in its outline the shape of his military cloak, became the most important meeting-place of Greek and Jewish civilization. When Alexandria was founded, the Jews were invited or commanded to colonize there, and in the war which followed Alexander's death, the citizens of Jerusalem were carried in a body to Egypt as the prisoners of Ptolemy Lagus. Many other Jews attracted by the fertility of the soil, migrated thither, so that from the very first, a large proportion of the population of Alexandria was Jewish. Although these Alexandrian Jews formed a community by themselves in the eastern

part of the city, they constantly met the Greeks upon an equal footing and needed all the restraining influence of the exclusiveness promoted by Ezra and Nehemiah to protect them from the fascination of that whirlpool of Greek life upon whose brink they now found themselves. The peaceful character of the Ptolemean period afforded ample opportunity for the pursuit of the gentler arts, and Alexandria became the rival of Athens as a center of Greek fashion and Greek learning. Fortunately for the Jews, the Ptolemies were wise and good rulers and cultivated only the better part of Hellenism, for Greece had long since passed her prime and was now fast approaching an inglorious old age. The fair structure of her civilization rested upon worthless and crumbling foundations, and her culture was only a veneer which covered the grossest immorality and depravity. "With the intellectual perfection went hand in hand a moral decay whose dreadful depths could not be hidden even by the roses which bloomed on the edge of the abyss." The rigidity and repression of Judaism to which the Hebrews were accustomed made the joyous grace and freedom of Greek life all the more alluring. Many of them adopted Greek manners and customs with the Greek language; and, as moral conduct had for hundreds of years been the center around which Jewish wisdom

had revolved, the more thoughtful Jews became deeply interested in the speculation of Greek philosophy.

While Hellenism was becoming the opponent of legalism in Alexandria, Judea remained almost exclusively Jewish; but even into this center of Judaism, although its doors were ostensibly as tightly closed as ever to foreign influence, Greek customs and a knowledge of the Greek language had entered with the Jewish traders who came and went among the chain of Greek cities by which their territory was encircled.

Jewish religion, however, was so ingrained a part of Jewish nature that although it might be broadened and illumined by contact with Hellenism, it was in small danger of being completely swept away by it. The Jews, scattered throughout Syria and Egypt, far from the temple worship which had filled so large a place in their lives, soon built meeting-houses or synagogues where they met twice on Sabbaths and once or twice on week days to pray and to listen to the reading and explanation of the sacred books. In conducting these services of the synagogue, the Jewish emigrants were quite independent, but gifts and sacrifices could be offered only at Jerusalem, and the yearly temple tribute required from all male Jews over twenty years of age was a tie which bound them to their mother

church. Offices for the collection of such dues were established in nearly every town, and men of good character were chosen yearly to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and place the money in the hands of the high priest. As the number of Jews living abroad was constantly increasing, the revenue thus collected must have been very large. The enriched treasury of the temple became tempting booty for heathen plunderers, and the importance of the high priest was materially increased by the large sum of money thus placed in his charge.

During the reign of the Ptolemies, the high priest was not only the custodian of the temple tribute, but collected and was held responsible for the annual tribute which Palestine paid to the Egyptian government. When he became in this way the secular and financial head of the nation as well as its religious leader, his power was almost unlimited and his importance in the community can hardly be exaggerated.* All the records indicate that the high priests upon whose shoulders rested so heavy a weight of responsibility were wholly unworthy of the trust committed to their charge, and that "graft" was well known even in the third century B. C.

* Associated with the high priest was the gerousia or Supreme Council of Elders, which afterwards developed into the Sanhedrin. The date of its origin is unknown, but it is first mentioned in the reign of Antiochus the Great, about 202 B. C. (Jos. Ant. XII, iii, 3.)

Josephus recounts the energetic measures practiced by Ptolemy Euergetes to recover the yearly tribute of twenty talents, all of which had been incautiously appropriated by the high priest Onias, and also mentions the enormous fortunes which Onias' successors made by farming the revenues they collected. While the religious leaders of the children of Israel were engrossed in these absorbing financial adventures, the candlestick at the entrance of the temple often went out from lack of care, and huge piles of wood were insufficient to preserve the fire on the sacred altar, although formerly two faggots a day had kept it constant.

A gratifying account in Ecclesiasticus of the high priest Simon, proves that among these counterfeit Jewish shepherds, there was one whose genuine and unselfish life restored the ancient honor of his office and rekindled with the sacred fire of the altar, the devotion of the children of Israel. "It was he that took thought for his people that they should not fall, and fortified the city against besieging." He left a permanent record of his public spirit in the new and substantial foundation of the temple which he built and in the city walls with which he replaced those torn down by Ptolemy Lagus. All the flowers of Oriental rhetoric were hardly adequate to express the admiration of the author of

Ecclesiasticus for this contemporary of his. As the morning-star in the midst of a cloud, as lilies at the waterspring, or as the sun shining forth upon the temple of the Most High, so he appeared when the people gathered about him as he came forth from the Holy of Holies. The eulogy is concluded by a beautiful description of the temple service conducted by Simon. It is quoted here as an expression of the ardent affection felt by pious Israelites for the courts of Jehovah.

“When he took up the robe of glory
And put on the perfection of exultation
In the ascent of the holy altar
He made glorious the precinct of the sanctuary.
When he took portions out of the priests’ hands
And stood by the edge of the altar
His brethren as a garland about him,
He was as a young cedar in Lebanon,
And as stems of palm trees, compassed they him round
about,

“And all the sons of Aaron were in their glory and the
oblation of the Lord was in their hands
Before all the congregation of Israel.
And finishing the service at the altars
That he might adorn the offering of the Most High,
the Almighty,
He stretched out his hand to the cup
And poured of the blood of the grape;
He poured out at the foot of the altar
A sweet smelling savour unto the Most High, the King
of all.

Then shouted the sons of Aaron,
They sounded the trumpets of beaten work,
They made a great noise to be heard,
For a remembrance before the Most High.
Then all the people together hasted
And fell down upon the earth on their faces
To worship their God, the Almighty God Most High.
The singers also praised him with their voices,
In the whole house there was made sweet melody.
And the people besought the Lord Most High
In prayer before him that is merciful
Till the worship of the Lord should be ended.

“And so they accomplished his service.
Then he went down and lifted up his hands
Over the whole congregation of the children of Israel
To give blessing to the Lord with his lips
And to glory in His name.
And he bowed himself down in worship a second time
To declare the blessing from the Most High.”

The book of Ecclesiasticus which contains the passage just quoted was a part of the Septuagint, the translation of the Jewish scriptures into Greek. This version of the Hebrew Bible, which was the most important product of the literary activity of the age, was probably written to meet the needs of Alexandrian Jews who no longer spoke their native tongue; but the following account of its origin given by Josephus, is in many respects not at all improbable. Ptolemy Philadelphus wished to procure, among other

literary treasures, a copy of the Jewish law for his great library at Alexandria. He therefore sent messengers to the high priest at Jerusalem to ask for a copy of the sacred books, and with it, Jewish sages who should convert it into a form intelligible to his countrymen. Flattered by the request of the king and the costly presents which accompanied it, the high priest selected seventy-two men, six from each tribe, and despatched them with a magnificent copy of the Jewish scriptures to Alexandria where they were royally received and given seats at the king's own table. Their wisdom was tested by puzzling questions and their marvellous answers were the wonder and admiration of the Greek courtiers. After this public display of learning, they withdrew to the Island of Pharos that they might pursue their labors undisturbed. Thirty-six half-ruined cells are said to have been pointed out to later generations as the scene of the translation where, according to Alexandrian tradition, the seventy-two translators, confined in pairs, all produced in seventy-two days, exactly the same inspired version without one single error or omission. The translation must, in reality, have been the work of at least two centuries and of several groups of translators, but it is quite possible that the translation of the Pentateuch may have taken place in Alexandria at the insti-

gation of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The production of the Septuagint, which was the Bible used for centuries not only by the Jews, but also by Christ and the early Christian church, is one of the most momentous events of the history of this intermediate period. It contained, in addition to the books of the Old Testament, the Apocryphal or "hidden" books which were denied entrance to later versions.

Two of these Apocryphal books, Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon, together with the canonical book of Ecclesiastes, are interesting to the student of the period as records of the impress of Hellenism upon their respective authors.

Ecclesiasticus was written in Palestine by Jesus, the son of Sirach, and was revised and translated into Greek by his grandson during the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes. It combines shrewd worldly wisdom with unworldly piety, and has been well-described by a modern author as the sanctification of common sense. Directions for behaviour under all circumstances are found upon its pages, from the most primitive and homely rules in regard to table manners to subtle and artistic essays on such subjects as the futility of dreams and the superiority of the man of learning to the man of affairs. The garb in which the author's thought is clothed is half-Greek, half-Hebrew, and certain figures of speech

indicate a familiarity with Homer and other Greek authors; but it is evident that his inner life was undisturbed by Hellenism, for the spirit of the book is plainly Hebrew. "All wisdom cometh from the Lord" and is embodied in the law of Moses. Virtue is rewarded by prosperity and wickedness punished by adversity during this earthly life, and there is no certainty of a life beyond the grave.

Certain passages suggest that Ecclesiasticus was read and studied by Christ and his disciples. The dissertation of St. James on the use of the tongue contains many thoughts similar to those of Jesus, the son of Sirach, on the same subject, and Ecc. xxviii; 1-3, "Forgive thy neighbor the hurt he hath done thee; and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest. Man cherisheth anger against man; and doth he seek healing from God?" cannot fail to recall one of the noble utterances in the Sermon on the Mount. *

The simple melody of Hebrew faith produces harsh discords in the mind of the author of Ecclesiastes, when combined with the refrain of the less happy phases of Greek philosophy. He can see no divinely ordered progress in life, but only a weary round of meaningless events wretchedly limited by the grave. Yet he looks back upon the faith of his childhood as the one sun-

* Material taken from Moulton's Modern Reader's Bible.

lit spot in the dreary landscape of his existence, and clings to the old belief in God and duty as an indispensable but inadequate refuge from the storms of pessimism and scepticism into which he has drifted. The book was probably written by an Alexandrian Jew about B.C. 200, but in accordance with the Greek etiquette of the period which forbade an author to claim the honor of his own work, was ascribed to its hero Solomon.

Hellenism and Judaism move in ideal and harmonious union across the pages of the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon. The Alexandrian Jew who was its author, standing on the border line between Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy, partook freely of the best fruits of both, especially of those Platonic writings inspired by the almost Christian life and death of Socrates. He sees the guiding hand of a loving heavenly Father in the history of his people and finds in the Greek conception of immortality, the solution of all the woes and mysteries of this earthly life. Ancient Hebrew wisdom is personified by him and becomes, like the Greek logos or word of St. John, the medium through which God reveals himself to men. Ewald asserts that "in the deep glow which, with all its apparent tranquillity, streams through its veins, we have a premonition of John; and in its conception of heathenism, a preparation for Paul, like a warm

rustle of spring, ere the time is fully come." And Gladstone sees in it the forerunner of true religion "which alone can flourish, not by a policy of isolation, but by filling itself with a humane and genial warmth."

In the case of each one of these three authors whose contact with Hellenism may have been typical of the wider experience of their race, Judaism, nourished from infancy upon the wholesome moral food of the ten Mosaic Commandments, had sufficient stamina to imbibe the rather dangerous tonic of Greek culture without succumbing to the poison of its skepticism and immorality.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSECUTION

The friendly relations between Egypt and Palestine were severed by the worthlessness and degeneracy of Ptolemy IV and when, at his death, his kingdom was left in the helpless hands of his five-year-old son, the Jews willingly joined Antiochus (III) the Great, in his efforts to make Palestine a part of his own kingdom of Syria. The Egyptian regent appealed to Rome for aid, placing the young king under her guardianship, but Rome was too busily engaged in war with Hannibal to interfere in behalf of her infant ward. Antiochus took advantage of the prevailing confusion to snatch the prize long coveted by Syria, and in B.C. 198, Palestine became once again a province of the northern kingdom. The Syrian king who was eager to retain both the territory and friendship of his new subjects, granted them even greater privileges than they had enjoyed under the Ptolemies.

The expenses of the temple service were to be borne by the Syrian government, and the

temple and everything connected with it was rendered non-taxable; foreigners were excluded from the temple and unclean animals from the city; Jewish slaves were liberated; the citizens of Jerusalem and all who should become citizens within a certain period of time were granted freedom from taxation for three years, and after that, were to pay only two-thirds of the allotted tax.

The overwhelming kindness and generosity of the Syrian king proved most favorable to the growth of Hellenism in Judea, not the nobler Hellenism which had prevailed in Alexandria, but the corrupt Hellenism of Antioch in all its luxury and vanity. The baser elements of the Greek life thus introduced developed rapidly, even among the priests, many of whom longed to be freed from the irksome restraint of the law; and Judaism, at last assailed at its very heart, might have shared the fate of other oriental religions and have been altogether obliterated or so saturated with Greek culture as to lose its true essence had the Jews not been roused to consciousness by the accession to the Syrian throne of that 'vile person of fierce countenance, understanding dark sentences, and full of marvellous words' portrayed in the visions of Daniel—Antiochus Epiphanes, the Nero of Jewish History.

Antiochus Epiphanes was of dual nature, extravagantly cruel and inconsistently kind by turns, a weather-vane blown to and fro by the powerful breezes of his own erratic impulses. The most arbitrary of Eastern despots, infuriated by any opposition to his imperious will, he at the same time affected a spectacular friendship and familiarity with the common people, chatting and carousing with anyone whom he might chance to meet, bestowing costly presents upon complete strangers, and indulging in the most unkingly and undignified escapades. He dispersed parties of young merry-makers, rushing in upon them with bag-pipe and horn; he poured the perfume prepared for his own bath upon the unsuspecting head of a visitor at the public bath-house, and then joined the other bathers in their rough scramble for a portion of the precious ointment. His incongruous delight in kingly splendor and fantastic pranks reached its height in a brilliant pageant, which he had prepared to rival in magnificence the triumphal processions of Rome, and in which he himself assumed the rôle of chief mountebank and clown, riding in and out upon a common work-horse. Public opinion generously excused him from all responsibility for his eccentric conduct by changing his surname, Epiphanes, brilliant, to Epimanes, mad, and was probably cor-

rect in assuming that the strange extremes to which he rushed were the emanations of a brilliant but disordered and unbalanced mind. He displayed much ability in enlarging and rebuilding Antioch, and in the energy and resource with which he pursued his ambition to make the power and glory of Syria equal to that of Rome, where he had spent his youth as a hostage. The startling and the sensational, lavish sacrifices, splendid gifts, and magnificent buildings were his delight.

In the depleted national treasury which Antiochus inherited along with the Syrian throne, we catch a first glimpse of the shadow of that iron hand whose relentless grasp was to become the terror of the Orient; for Rome, returning from war with Philip of Macedon, had demanded an explanation of Syria's treatment of her Egyptian ward and had enforced her demand with the sword. The enervated Seleucids were no match for the stern and hardy Romans. They were easily defeated in the battle of Magnesia and the price paid by Syria for Palestine was an almost impossible military tax of twelve years' duration.

To meet the exorbitant demands of Rome, the Syrian kings rifled the treasuries of the heathen temples scattered throughout their territory and in the reign of Seleucus IV, the elder brother and

predecessor of Antiochus Epiphanes, an attack was made upon the treasury of the Jewish temple. The panic occurring in Jerusalem, when Heliodorus, the king's tax collector, entered the temple and demanded the sacred treasure from the high priest, is vividly portrayed in Second Maccabees. The matrons, girt with sack cloth, rushed distracted through the streets of the city, while the maidens peered anxiously from doors and windows; the priests wearing their robes of office lay prostrate before the temple altar, and the high priest was in an agony of grief and apprehension. All Jerusalem bowed in prayer, imploring the mercy and protection of Almighty God. The prayer of the grief-stricken city was answered by the apparition at the temple treasury of three angel warriors before whose terrific onslaught the unfeeling Heliodorus fell, like a leaf in the wind, to the pavement. He was borne from the temple on a litter by his terrified attendants and was recalled from death only by the prayers of the blameless high-priest Onias.

Our matter-of-fact twentieth century minds might suggest as an interpretation of this wondrous tale that the divinely inspired faith, courage, and determination of the good and faithful Onias were the celestial champions that saved the treasure of the sanctuary from Heliodorus and his robber band; for Onias, like his father

and predecessor, Simon II, was unswerving in his loyalty to his religion, and his devotion to the duties of his holy office. When the faith of his contemporaries grew dim or failed, he was still a bright and shining light to his generation. He became later the leader of the faithful or pious Jews while his younger brother Jason led the Hellenists.

Syria's attempt to deprive the Jewish temple of its gold caused a sharp division between the Hellenists and the Jews who adhered to their native customs and retained the use of their native language, a breach which was widened by the entrance of Antiochus Epiphanes upon his career as king of Syria, for that irresponsible monarch was impelled by some wayward wind of fancy to desire the complete Hellenization of the unfortunate Jews. The two spurs by which he was driven to a constantly increasing activity in carrying out his policy were his urgent need of money and the treachery of two Jewish priests of the Hellenist party, described in the pungent language of Second Maccabees as "Jason, that ungodly wretch and no high-priest" and Menelaus, "having the fury of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a wild beast."

The high-priesthood, in accordance with the established custom of the Syrian government, was sold by Antiochus to the highest bidder and was

obtained by Jason, who not only promised the king a large sum of money, but cunningly begged permission to enroll his fellow-citizens as Antiocheans and to erect a gymnasium in Jerusalem where he might instruct the Jewish youth in Greek customs. Under Jason's leadership, the work of Hellenization was carried on with vigor and success. The courts of the temple were forsaken and the new Greek gymnasium was thronged with Jewish youth, who engaged daily in the games of the palaestra, shocking Jewish modesty by their Greek attire. Even the priests neglected the duties of their office and rushed from the temple to the gymnasium when they heard the signal for throwing the quoit which marked the beginning of the games. With an elasticity of religious belief which belied his Jewish origin, Jason even went so far as to send a sacrifice to the quadrennial feast of Hercules at Tyre; but the messengers entrusted with the offering found their mission so distasteful that at their request, the money for the sacrifice was used instead for the building of triremes.

Jason's career as high priest had lasted only three years when he was superseded by a rival Hellenist, Menelaus, who obtained the coveted office by out-bidding all opponents, but was almost immediately deposed by Antiochus because

he was unable to pay the enormous sum of money he had promised. Fortunately for Menelaus, Antiochus was called in haste to war in Egypt. In his absence, the renegade priest bribed the king's deputy with golden vessels stolen from the temple, executed everyone who placed an obstacle in his devious path, and reinstated himself in office.

Among his victims was Onias, the leader of the faithful, who fearlessly denounced Menelaus for his shameless use of the consecrated gold and fled to the temple of Daphne from the violence which was sure to follow. He was dragged from this place of refuge and murdered by hired assassins with a brutality which excited indignation of both the Hellenists and the faithful.* Even the inconsistent Antiochus is said to have shed bitter tears on hearing of the result of his own wickedness.

Two years later, in B. C. 170, Jason, encouraged by a false report of the absent king's death, made an attempt to regain the office from which

* The murdered Onias III left a son, Onias IV, who sought refuge from the persecution in the Court of Ptolemy Philometor. There he conceived the idea of transferring the center of the imperilled national religion to Egypt and, about 160 B. C., obtained permission from Ptolemy to build a temple resembling the one at Jerusalem in the district of Heliopolis near the city of Leontopolis. The new temple, since it checked the flow of Jewish tribute money to Palestine, received the favor and protection of Egyptian sovereigns; and although Leontopolis was but a feeble rival to Jerusalem, the Egyptian Jews maintained public worship there until the time of Christ.

he had been deposed. Gathering a force of a thousand men, he made a large breach in the walls of Jerusalem, through which he entered the city, shedding much blood and temporarily capturing Menelaus. He was unable to gain a permanent victory and was driven forth from his native land never to return. After a life of much adventure, he died a fugitive in Sparta and he that "had cast out many unburied, had none to mourn for him nor any solemn funeral at all nor sepulcher with his fathers."

Antiochus, returning in a bad humor from Egypt, where his plans had been completely frustrated, chose to interpret this act of Jason's as a Jewish rebellion against himself. Menelaus was more firmly established in his favor than ever and his accumulated wrath descended upon the heads of the innocent Jews. At his command, a terrible massacre took place in Jerusalem. Thousands of Jewish citizens were cut down in the streets or driven to the house-tops only to meet with the same fate; but sadder to loyal Jews than the loss of homes or loved ones was the intrusion of the heathen king, guided by the traitorous Menelaus, into the innermost recess of their cherished temple where he helped himself freely to the great wealth which had been saved from the robber Heliodorus. All the cherished articles of temple furniture which the wealthy

Babylonian Jews had sent to Jerusalem by Ezra, the golden candlestick, the golden altar, and the table for consecrated bread, were carried away to Antioch, the golden candlestick which had lighted the entrance to the temple with its perpetual flame falling to the lot of the hated Menelaus.

For two years there was rest from persecution. Then Antiochus again returned from the south where he had been compelled by the ultimatum of Rome to give up once for all his plans for the occupation of Egypt, and once again the unfortunate Jews must bear the heat of his baffled rage. His undivided attention was now turned toward the Hellenization of Palestine. A massacre even worse than that which had preceded it was conducted by Apollonius, the Syrian tax collector, who under pretense of peace, quietly entered Jerusalem upon the Sabbath day. Men were slain in the temple and synagogue, and women and children dragged from the sanctuary to the slave-market. The walls of the city, which had been built and preserved with care, were levelled to the ground. The houses were plundered and many of them burned. There was yet a third massacre and captivity, and the hill on which the ancient palace of David had stood was fortified and transformed into a Syrian garrison, a heathen monster in stone, it seemed to the unhappy Jews, looking grimly down in perpetual

enmity upon the temple and the half-ruined buildings which surrounded it.

On the twenty-fifth of October, B. C. 168, the obsession of Antiochus found vent in the mad decree by which the Jews, with the religious fervor of generations of ancestors flowing in their veins and the impress of centuries of religious training engraved upon their hearts, were to be transformed at a single stroke, into unstable and pagan Greeks. All were to be one people and everyone was to be subject to the same law. The law was thoroughly and systematically executed by a king's commissioner appointed for that purpose. Assisted by minor officers, he erected in every town and city of Judea altars upon which the Jews were compelled to offer sacrifices to heathen gods and, on the king's birthday, to taste the unclean flesh of the sacrificial feast. All the sacred books which could be found were destroyed, and the observance of the Sabbath and the ancient rite of circumcision were forbidden upon pain of immediate death. Dignified Israelites were compelled to join in the revels of the feast of Bacchus, marching in the Bacchanalian procession, their gray heads crowned with festal wreaths of ivy. The temple was formally dedicated to the Olympian Jupiter and profaned and desecrated in a way most heart-rending to the unhappy Hebrews. Its gates were burned, and

the partition which separated the inner and outer courts was broken down. An unkempt vegetation, beneath the shade of which the rites of Daphne took place in all their licentiousness, was allowed to spring up in the hitherto well-kept precincts. As a crowning insult, a herd of swine was slaughtered within the sacred enclosures. Their blood was sprinkled upon the sacrificial altar and the Holy of Holies, and the sacred scrolls were soiled and defaced with broth made from the unclean flesh.

Nothing could have been a better antidote for Hellenism than the hateful and premature measures by which Antiochus sought to force it into existence. The sharp blows of the persecution roused the Jewish nation from its lethargy. The more timid submitted in terror, but many clung to their faith with a wealth of love and devotion which fully atoned for the poverty of their ideals and their conception of the God for whom they suffered. Ezra and Nehemiah might have been well satisfied with the result of their work if they could have seen men die willingly rather than transgress one petty detail of the law which they had established. The objects for which men became martyrs, the distinctions of food, the exaggerated observance of the Sabbath and the Sabbatical year, the rite of circumcision, and the offering of sacrifice, were two centuries later cast

aside by the choicest spirits of the Christian church as out-grown and worthless superficialities; yet to the noble martyrs of the Maccabean period, each separate issue was a glowing coal in the living fire of spiritual freedom, and, as such, must be carefully cherished lest the great whole be extinguished and lost.

"O God of life and truth, give us a dream to fight for! Love, honor, faith, to suffer and to die for! For whenever men die for a cause, mistaken or not, Misled or not, there truth advances an imperceptible degree."

The spirit with which Jewish martyrs met their fate is preserved for us in the traditional accounts of Second Maccabees. Two women who had circumcised their infants in spite of the king's edict, were cast headlong from the walls of Jerusalem after being subjected in the streets of the city to the derisive scorn of their persecutors.

Eleazar, an aged scribe, steadfastly refused to eat swine's flesh or to deceive his tormentors by substituting lawful meat for the forbidden food. He died the death of a martyr, saying with his last breath, "I will show myself such an one as my age requireth, and leave a notable example to such as be young to die willingly and courageously for the holy laws."

Most heroic of all was that mother of seven sons who after witnessing the torture and death

of her six boys, still exhorted the seventh to be loyal to his God, making this brave, but pathetic plea. "O, my son, have pity upon me that bare thee and nourished thee and brought thee up unto this age and endured the troubles of education. I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and earth and all that is therein and consider that God made them of things that were not and so was mankind made likewise. Fear not this tormentor but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren." The young man met his death in a manner befitting the son of such a mother, and she herself last of all received a martyr's crown.*

At last the long pent-up grief and rage of the Jewish people burst forth with a volcanic strength. A venerable priest, Mattathias of the house of Asmon, who with his five stalwart sons had taken refuge from the terrors of the persecution in his ancestral town of Modin, was the first to rebel. When commanded to take part in the monthly sacrifice ordered by the king, he replied with spirit: "Though all the nations that are under the king's domain obey and fall away everyone from the religion of their fathers and give consent to

* The book of Daniel, in the opinion of modern scholars, was written during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes to encourage the Jews to remain constant to their religion throughout the horrors of the persecution.

his commandments, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. We will not hearken to the king's words to go from our religion either on the right hand or the left."

A disloyal Jew came forward to obey the request of the king's commissioner. At the sight, Mattathias' anger blazed. He fell upon the traitor and killed him; then slaying the king's officer and overturning the heathen altar, he fled with his sons to the mountains crying, "Whosoever is zealous of the law and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me." There with a constantly increasing band of followers, they lived in a state of open rebellion, observing their religious customs and making raids into the surrounding country, destroying Greek altars and circumcising uncircumcised children. The limestone caves of the desert furnished them shelter, and roots and herbs a scanty subsistence.

When a band of Jewish fugitives was attacked by the Syrians and a thousand were slain because they would not fight on the Sabbath, Mattathias with impatient scorn for such short-sighted maintenance of the letter of the law, decided for himself and his followers, "Whosoever shall come to make battle with us on the Sabbath day, we will fight against him; neither will we die all as our

brethren that were murdered in the secret places."

The great effort of rallying his down-trodden countrymen was a severe strain on the failing strength of Mattathias, who was now a very old man. He survived the hardships of life in the wilderness only a year, and died, committing the cause for which he had struggled bravely to the five sons who gathered about him to receive his blessing. With his last breath, he exhorted them to fight for the law and avenge their country's wrongs, desiring for them no greater honor than the service and favor of God which had ever been the reward of the heroes of his race. He bade them make Simon their counsellor, and Judas, who was brave and strong, their leader in battle.

The body of the aged priest was borne to the ancestral tomb at Modin where it was interred amidst the lamentations of all Israel.

CHAPTER V

JUDAS MACCABEUS

Judas Maccabeus cheerfully accepted the forlorn bequest of his aged father. Like a young lion, he fought the enemies of his religion and with gracious chivalry, he guarded the weak and timid of his race. In the four records of his prowess which have been handed down to us, the brightness of his fame is untarnished by mention of one dishonorable or disloyal deed. He stands pre-eminent among the heroes of his race for patriotism, courage, undaunted faith in God, and unsullied purity of character, fighting always against tremendous odds, not for glory or renown, but for the favor of God and the religious liberty of his race. The following quotation from a modern English poet might well be applied to this warrior of ancient Israel.

One who never turned his back
But fought, breast forward;
Never doubted clouds would break
Never dreamed though right were worsted
Wrong would triumph.

In accordance with the spirit of his age, he was a faithful friend, but a relentless enemy, observing to the last letter the rough edict of the Jewish law, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The successive and vigorous blows which he dealt the Syrians are suggested by his surname Maccabeus, the Hammer, which became later the name by which his entire family was best known.

When the constant raids with which Judas, like his father, harassed the Greeks, killing the ungodly and burning their houses, grew too troublesome to be longer ignored, Apollonius, the governor of Samaria, marched against him with an army. He was met, apparently near Samaria, by Judas who slew him and with his handful of men, put the Samaritan army to flight. A trophy of his first victory, the captured sword of Apollonius with its jewelled hilt and blade of tempered Damascus steel, became the weapon with which the Jewish hero ever afterwards fought his battles for righteousness.

During the same year, Seron, the commander of the Syrian forces in Palestine, attacked this young lion of the desert. The little band of faithful Jews, who had been all day without food, grew faint-hearted and despondent when they saw the large number and superior equipment of their opponents, but they were so re-animated by

the faith of their brave young commander, who assured them that with the God of heaven, it was all one to deliver with a great multitude or a small company, that again they carried all before them, and Seron and his army fled in disorder, to the land of the Philistines.

All Palestine rang with reports of Judas' valor, and the Syrians began to realize that the Jewish insurrection was not a trivial affair to be lightly brushed aside. The angry king resolved to exterminate utterly this despised race which he had been unable either to bribe or to torture into submission. He was himself obliged, on account of his pressing need of money, to go into Persia to collect tribute, but he left half his army with Lysias, a Syrian of high rank, whom he commanded to uproot and destroy all the Jews, to remove every vestige of Jewish occupation from Palestine, and to divide the lands of the Jews among aliens. Lysias gathered a large army, 40,000 footmen and 70,000 horsemen, if we may trust the somewhat questionable enumeration of First Maccabees, and sent it into Judea under the command of three noted Syrian generals, Ptolemy, Gorgias and Nicanor. So certain did the victory of the Syrian troops seem that they were followed by slave-dealers who had bargained with the Syrian leaders to exchange the large sums of gold and silver which they carried

for captive Jews. The price had actually been agreed upon and the money thus obtained was to enrich the impoverished Syrian treasury.

The Jews also made preparations for their desperate struggle for existence. Upon the heights of Mizpeh whence they could look down upon the forsaken streets of Jerusalem, the desecrated and insulted temple, and the menacing Syrian garrison, Judas assembled and organized his little force of three thousand men. In sackcloth and ashes, they prayed and fasted, spreading out before themselves the cherished sacred emblems which they could no longer use, the scrolls defaced by the Greeks with heathen images, the first fruits, the tithes, and the garments of the priests. They were so filled with holy zeal and burning indignation by this sad retrospection that Judas voiced the mind of all when he declared that it was far better for them to die in battle than to behold the calamities of their people and their sanctuary. He divided his army into companies commanded by his four brothers, and leaving only the timid and preoccupied behind* they marched down to encamp among the hills at the south of Emmaus. An attempt to surprise and destroy the Jewish army was made by five thousand Syrians under Gorgias; but Judas, who had been informed of their intention, quickly and

* I Maccabees III, 56.

silently changed his position; and the Syrian general finding the Jewish camp deserted, spent the night and a part of the next day in a fruitless search among the mountains for the rebels whom he supposed had fled in fright. This division of the Syrian army was favorable to Judas' ill-armed and scanty troops, and they immediately prepared to surprise the Syrian camp. After a stirring speech, in which their leader recalled the marvellous deliverances of the past, the trumpets sounded and the Jewish army fell upon the startled Syrians with such fury that again the result was a complete victory for the Jews. Three thousand Syrians were killed, and the living pursued to the plains of Gazera, Idumea, Azotus and Jamnia.

But the second division of the Syrian army must be reckoned with before the Jews could safely secure the tempting plunder of the Syrian camp. When Gorgias and his men returned from their futile search, they found their tents in flames, and the Jews drawn up before them in battle-array. Always superstitious, they were filled with an unreasoning terror of this Jewish warrior who with his army seemed to bear a charmed existence, and like a herd of deer at the sight of the hunter, they fled without raising a weapon in self-defense. The victors returned homeward that night praising God in songs of

thanksgiving, their dingy and ill-clad ranks brightened by the blue silk, the costly Tyrian purple, the shining shields and weapons of the Syrian camp, their hearts made glad by the possession of the gold and silver which was to have been the price of their freedom.

A fourth victory won by Judas in an unequal conflict at Bethsura with Lysias himself so discomfited the Syrian leader that he withdrew to Antioch to collect a larger army; and the road which led to the goal of Jewish desire, Jerusalem and the deserted temple, lay open before the Jewish army. Led by Judas, they hastened thither, and their frantic grief at the sight of the overgrown courts and profaned altar of the sanctuary, whose well-kept precincts had hitherto been their pride, soon gave way to the quiet joy of the restoration. Priests of blameless life were chosen to remove everything which had been polluted by contact with the unclean animals: the heathen altars and pagan statues were banished and the whole temple was thoroughly purged and renovated, while Judas and his soldiers held the Syrian garrison at bay.

A curious instance of the punctiliousness which characterized the period was the attitude of the puzzled priests toward the original altar of burnt sacrifice. After much consultation, it was decided that the stones which had been solemnly

consecrated, could not have been rendered wholly unclean by the recent pollution, and they were carefully laid away in an obscure corner of the temple until some prophet should come to impart to future generations the true secret of their proper disposal.

The burned gates and broken partitions were rebuilt, and a new table, altar of incense, and iron candlestick encased in wood, replaced the costly furniture which had been carried away by Antiochus. Exactly three years from that twenty-fifth of December when heathen sacrifices had first been offered in the Jewish temple by the king's commissioner, the front of the temple was decked with the crowns and shields of gold which had been taken from the Syrians, the shew-bread was placed upon the table, the incense set smoking on the altar, and most significant of all, the perpetual light which symbolized the eternal radiance of the Spirit of God was relighted upon the sacred candlestick. Thousands of tapers supplemented the flame of the holy candlestick and before their light, for eight days, the Jews celebrated the feast of the dedication, dancing and singing to the sound of the lute and the harp or marching in festive procession bearing the branches of palms and of evergreens. Costly sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered to God and the reaction which succeeded the intense

grief of three years of hardship and persecution culminated in one of the most joyous occasions of Jewish history. The Feast of Lights or the winter Feast of Tabernacles which commemorated the rededication of the temple, became a regular festival of the Jewish church, and is still celebrated annually by the Jewish people.

Notwithstanding the brilliant victories of the Jewish army, Judaism was still surrounded by enemies. As the Syrian garrison on the Mount of David was a constant menace to the safety of the restored temple, the temple mount, which later became one of the strongest garrisons in the world, was now for the first time converted into a rival stronghold by means of high walls and strong towers. Judas also established an outpost at Bethzur to protect the southern approach to Jerusalem.

The Edomites on the south, the Moabites on the east, and the Greek colonies on the north and west of Judea, all of whom had joined the Syrians in their attempt to uproot Judaism and restore idol-worship, now manifested a jealous hatred of their victorious enemies by a bitter persecution of the Jewish immigrants who lived in their territories. In response to the pleas for relief from persecution which came to him from all directions, Judas divided his army, which now numbered eleven thousand men, between himself

and his brother Simon, and they went forth, Simon into Galilee and Judas and his younger brother Jonathan into Edom, Gilead, and Samaria. Everywhere they were successful, overpowering the idolaters, and bringing back with them to Jerusalem faithful Jews with their wives and children.

In B. C. 164, while Judas was subduing the heathen nations of Palestine, Judaism was freed from its most vindictive enemy, for Antiochus Epiphanes, returning from an unsuccessful campaign in Persia, died of a loathsome and incurable disease. Jewish annals abound in legendary accounts of the humiliation and death-bed repentance of this eccentric monarch, but these traditions are so warped by Jewish prejudice that they cannot be considered authentic.

The regency of the realm and the guardianship of the ten-year-old Antiochus Eupator were immediately seized by Lysias, although they had been bequeathed by the deceased king to his friend Philip; and the preoccupation of the Syrian magnates in their rivalry might have afforded Judea a long period of peace if Judas, no longer able to bear the irritating proximity of the Syrian garrison in Jerusalem, had not vigorously besieged this obstacle in the path to Jewish freedom with batterings rams and engines. In spite of his vigilance, several of the besieged

Syrians, with certain Jewish sympathizers, escaped to Antioch and informed Lysias that matters in Judea would soon be beyond his control unless the power of Judas was speedily curtailed. Lysias' answer was a visit to Judea with the young king and an enormous army. He approached Jerusalem from the south, attacking Bethzur so successfully that Judas was obliged to march from Jerusalem to the relief of the besieged fortress. The two armies met at Bethzacharias. A military custom peculiar to the century was the use of elephants in battle, a precedent established by Alexander the Great himself. The great beasts about which the Syrian forces were grouped, carried upon their backs strong wooden towers each occupied by ten or twelve Syrians of high rank. "And to the end that they might provoke the elephants to fight, they showed them the blood of grapes and mulberries."

The angry elephants with their tall howdahs and dark Indian drivers, the hooked battle chariots, the glistening spears and rattling armor of a hundred thousand Syrian soldiers spread over the hills and valleys south of Jerusalem in imposing and terrifying array. "Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and of brass, the mountains glistened therewith and shone like lamps of fire. Wherefore all that heard the voice of the

multitude and the marching of the company and the rattling of the arms were moved; for the army was very great and mighty." Nevertheless the Jews went boldly forth to meet this army which was ten times as great as their own and again distinguished themselves by remarkable acts of bravery. Eleazer, the fourth brother of Judas, performed the almost impossible feat of cutting his way through the Syrian ranks to the elephant upon which, from the great height of its wooden tower, he supposed the young king to be seated. He crept beneath the huge beast and killed it by an upward stroke of his sword, but was himself crushed and killed beneath the weight of the falling animal, thereby earning the title of Avaran or Beast-sticker, by which he was ever afterward remembered.

In spite of the valor of his soldiers, it was soon evident that against such overpowering numbers, Judas must meet with his first defeat, and although the fact is only hinted at in First Maccabees and is openly denied in Second Maccabees, the Jewish army was completely routed, driven back into the temple fortress and there besieged. Owing to the rest of the Sabbatical year, there was a scarcity of food in the besieged city, and the Jews soon reached the point where they must choose one of two alternatives, starvation or surrender. At this juncture, Lysias

was informed by messengers from Antioch that the regency had been usurped by his rival Philip. He was therefore obliged to bring his war with the Jews to a hasty conclusion. Mene-laüs was beheaded as the prime mover in the whole vexatious affair, and a treaty in which the Jews were promised freedom to observe the laws of their ancestors ended the conflict for religious liberty. By a strange incongruity of fate, the achievement for which they had fought and struggled was consummated, not by one of their brilliant victories, but by their first defeat. There was no further attempt on the part of the Syrians to uproot and destroy Jewish institutions, and the "godly" were many of them satisfied to let matters rest there.

But Judas and his followers could feel little confidence in a treaty of peace which was followed by a razing of the walls of Jerusalem to the ground and the retention of the Syrian garrisons in Bethzur and Jerusalem. They had besides little appetite for subordination to Alcimus, a descendant of the house of Aaron who was leader of the Hellenists, and wished to become high priest. Constant friction occurred between the two parties in Jerusalem.

Lysias, upon his return to Antioch, had conquered Philip, but had been in turn conquered by a new claimant of the Syrian throne, Demetrius,

who beheaded the chancellor and the young king and took possession of the sovereignty. To the new king Demetrius, Alcimus made an appeal for aid, sending him costly gifts and the message that Judas was constantly inciting the Jews to rebellion and that there could be no peace in the land while he lived. Nicanor, an experienced Syrian general, was accordingly sent with an army into Judea to subdue the Jews, kill Judas, and establish Alcimus as high priest.

A picturesque touch is added to the conflict between Judas and Nicanor by the tradition that the rough Syrian general, since his first encounter with Judas at Emmaus, had entertained a lively admiration for the Jewish warrior, and upon meeting him face to face in Jerusalem had yielded completely to the charm of his impressive and high-minded personality. "He would not willingly have Judas out of his sight, for he loved the man from his heart. He prayed him also to take a wife and beget children." The account leads us to believe that the attraction was mutual, that Judas acted upon the advice of the Syrian general, and that for a year and a half, the two commanders lived in peace at Jerusalem, meeting daily, each enjoying the friendship of the other. Then Alcimus, in a message to Demetrius, denounced Nicanor as a traitor who plotted to make Judas ruler of Syria. Nicanor's friendship

would not stand the strain of possible disaster to himself. Still he was reluctant to betray his comrade. When he received the royal edict which commanded him to send the Jewish commander as a prisoner to Antioch, he became so churlish and ill-tempered that Judas, anticipating evil, withdrew with his men from Jerusalem.

In the search which followed Nicanor appeared before the temple court ordering the frightened priests to deliver Judas into his hands without delay. They swore they did not know the whereabouts of the man he sought, and tried in vain to appease his wrath by pointing out the sacrifice in honor of King Demetrius, which smoked upon the temple altar. By his irreverent mockery and blasphemous reply, the name of Nicanor was indelibly written upon Jewish memory long after the names of the other heathen leaders in the Maccabean struggle had become faded and indistinct. "He stretched out his right hand toward the temple and made an oath in this manner:— 'If ye will not deliver me Judas as a prisoner, I will lay this temple of God even with the ground, and I will break down the altar, and erect a notable temple unto Bacchus.'"

All the latent courage of the Jews was aroused by the threatened destruction of their cherished temple, of whose blessing they had recently

been deprived and for whose restoration Jewish blood had been freely shed.

After a preliminary skirmish at Capharsalama, the rival forces met at Bethhoron where Judas had already gained one great victory and was now to gain his last.

With the same cheerful confidence and faith in God which characterized his entire career, he encouraged his men to meet that imposing array of angry elephants, glittering swords, and well-trained soldiers which had proved disastrous to the Jews on the field of Bethzacharias. The Syrians entered the battle with trumpet and song, the Israelites with invocation and prayer. "Fighting with their hands and praying with their hearts," they encountered the great Syrian army, and their efforts were crowned with a victory in which the hand of God was plainly visible. Nicanor was one of the first to fall and the loss of the Syrian commander occasioned the wild confusion in which his army fled. His dead body in its magnificent armor was carried with other spoil to Jerusalem, and the hand which had been raised insolently against the house of God was suspended over one of its gates. This entrance to the temple bore till the date of its destruction the name Nicanor's gate, and the day on which the victory took place was celebrated annually by the Jews as Nicanor's day.

After the defeat of Nicanor, Judas stood at the head of the Jewish nation. He had become convinced that no dependence could be placed upon the promises of the Syrian authorities, and that the religious freedom of Israel would never be out of danger until it was guarded by an independent Jewish government.

Since her conflict with Antiochus the Great, Rome had watched the affairs of Syria with unceasing vigilance, constantly interfering with her colonial policy, ever ready to cripple her growing power. Reports of Rome's justice, her fidelity, her simplicity of life, her prowess in battle, and her wonderful military conquests had reached Judas through his contact with the Syrians. He resolved to throw himself upon the mercy of Rome, and to beg her cooperation in making his nation politically independent, a project he dared not undertake alone. Ambassadors were sent by him to Rome to arrange an alliance, but they returned from their long journey too late.

Two months after the battle of Bethhoron, Demetrius sent a vast army into Judea to avenge the defeat and death of Nicanor; and for some reason, possibly because of a sag in popular enthusiasm, the reaction which might follow a great victory, more probably because his broader policy had antagonized the bigoted, Judas was unable to rally his scattered troops. Only eight hundred

men gathered to oppose the great Syrian army, and defeat seemed so certain that Judas was begged by his friends to seek safety in flight. "If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honor," was his reply. He fought with his usual lion-like bravery, but was caught between the two wings of the Syrian army and fell. The body of this last great hero of the Jewish race was recovered by his two brothers, Simon and Jonathan, and was interred beside that of his father at Modin. The dirge which had been sung for David and Saul went up from all Judea, "How is the valiant man fallen, the savior of Israel."

The six years which comprised the public career of Judas Maccabeus were crowded with acts of public service. He breathed into the hearts of his oppressed countrymen the reanimating spirit of his own courage and faith in God; he transformed a race of servile subordinates into a nation of brave and heroic soldiers; he delivered his country from the heathen oppressor, established its religious liberty and sowed the seed from which soon after his death, political independence was to spring. He destroyed with the sword the tangible debasing evidences of Hellenism, but was unable either to destroy or escape its subtle contagion.

The martyrs of the Maccabean persecution

who willingly gave their lives to resist the encroachments of Greek influence, uttered with their last breath a belief in the doctrine of immortality which Hellenism had established in Judea, and an incident related in Second Maccabees leads us to believe that the gloomy doubts of Jesus, the son of Sirach, in regard to the future life found no resting-place in the optimistic mind of Judas Maccabeus. When the Jewish hero, after a skirmish with the Syrians, returned to the battlefield to perform the last melancholy service for the dead, he found beneath the coat of each fallen comrade a small Philistine idol which had been worn as a talisman against disaster. The heart of Judas was saddened by the fear that this "flicker of idolatry" might deprive his beloved soldiers of the eternal bliss of a future existence. With his living companions, he prayed earnestly that their sin might not be remembered by God, and also collected a generous sum in silver coins, which he sent as an offering to Jerusalem to efface the memory of the idolatrous superstition and to insure the future happiness of these misguided souls.

Everything indicates that the entire life and policy of Judas combined the nobler elements of both Judaism and Hellenism, and that he stood above that inescapable prison, the rut of legalism, which the stream of Pharisaic life, by its very ac-

tivity, was constantly wearing deeper and narrower. The fact that he chose the more open-minded of his countrymen to perform important missions could not fail to irritate the pious, and it is a significant fact that his memory is ignored in the traditions of the Talmudic schools. His name does not occur once in the Mishna nor in the yearly thanksgiving which commemorates the deliverance from Antiochus. But if he was unappreciated by the religious leaders of his race, the adoration of the people was his, and posterity has given his name a high place among the military heroes of the world.

"Spirit exalted! Above the armies of men in battle it hovers, valorous, undefiled;

There, on the field of carnage and death, stand forth the highest instincts of the soul;

There find ye courage, strength, nobility, ungrudging service;

There find ye infinite tenderness and compassion, the generosity of worthy foemen;

Just as, in the presence and hour of death, in the pain and sorrow, in the sharp arraignment, the veil harshly rent asunder,

Man sees life's truth and falsehood, the spirit, love, and what it is really for;

So, in the hour of war, nations awake and clear their eyes.

Just as, out of trial, grief, adversity, sore loss, has come man's best endeavor;

So, out of the world's distress, has come its highest
dream.

And here and there, on the crest of the years, one has
appeared

Sending his soul up like a sheet of flame,

Lighting the sky with terrible glad truth, blinding the
world,

To show what man can be."

PART III

THE ROMAN PERIOD. 160 B. C.—70 A. D.

CHAPTER VI

JUDEA AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM UNDER THE ASMONEAN MONARCHS

The ambassadors sent by Judas to Rome did not return until the hopes of the Maccabean party had been temporarily eclipsed by the defeat and death of their brave commander, but the result of their long journey, a treaty which promised the aid and protection of Rome, was most significant in the history of the Jewish people. The bond which was to deliver them from the despotism of Syria became a century later the fetter by which they were held in helpless dependence at the feet of Rome and "from henceforth, for good or evil, the fortunes of the Jewish State were inextricably bound up with those of its gigantic ally—at first on terms of friendly equality, soon of complete dependence, then of violent conflict, finally of the most profound spiritual relations—each borrowing from each the peculiar polity, teaching, superstitions, vices and virtues of the other" and it was beneath the watchful surveillance of Rome that the events

which followed the disastrous defeat at Eleasa took place.

The reins of government which had fallen from the hands of Judas were taken up by the Hellenist high priest, the hated Alcimus, and the army of Bacchides over-ran Judea. For a time it seemed as if the dark days of the persecution were to return. The righteous were hunted down and killed in such numbers that the survivors, like their noble fathers, were obliged to seek refuge in the desert. But the years of valiant military service through which Israel had just passed did not prove fruitless. With Jonathan, the younger brother of Judas, as their leader, they displayed such skill in guerilla warfare that Bacchides could gain no permanent advantage, and was obliged to content himself with placing Syrian garrisons in the principal cities of Judea and taking the children of prominent Jewish families as hostages to Jerusalem.

Two years later, Alcimus intensified the already active hatred of all orthodox Israelites by breaking down the partition which excluded Gentiles from the inner court of the temple; and a stroke of apoplexy in which his enemies beheld the retribution of God for this act of sacrilege, ended his career. No high priest was appointed to fill the vacant place, and Bacchides returned to Antioch.

Jonathan evidently took advantage of the opportunity afforded by this clear field, for in B. C. 158, the Hellenists alarmed by his growing power, recalled Bacchides to Jerusalem. As the Syrian general was no match for Jonathan and his adherents, he executed the Hellenists who had sent for him, made a peace with the Hebrew leader upon his own terms, and left Judea never to return.

The fog of obscurity in which the seven succeeding years are enveloped, is pierced only by the light of one brief, but significant sentence found in First Maccabees. "Thus the sword ceased from Israel, but Jonathan dwelt at Michmash and began to govern the people; and he destroyed the ungodly men out of Israel." It is apparent that the following of Jonathan constantly increased, that he established a government at Michmash, and that although the Hellenists still held sway in Jerusalem, he became in fact, if not in name, the ruler of Judea.

Jonathan was the politician and diplomat of the Maccabean family. Although wholly destitute of the lofty ideals and moral grandeur of his fallen brother, he was nevertheless able to perform important services for his country by his adroit use of Syria's waning power. With dogged persistence, he rose, step by step, sometimes by force, sometimes by craft, to a place of

commanding influence in Judea, lifting his nation with him to a position of almost complete independence.

The aim of the Maccabean party was no longer religious liberty. It was the ambition of Jonathan to shake off the yoke of Syria, to win political freedom for his country, to enlarge its borders, and increase its strength. Ten years earlier, his hopes would have been futile, but now no Syrian king felt certain of his throne; Syria was crippled by internal strife, and the well-trained army of Jonathan must be either a menace or a crutch. Alexander Balas, the pretended son of Antiochus Epiphanes, disputed the claim of Demetrius to the throne. A similar rivalry was enacted between their sons, Antiochus VI and Demetrius II. All four were eager suppliants for the friendship and aid of Jonathan. The rounds of the ladder upon which the wily Israelite rose to eminence, were the favors with which these aspirants for the Syrian throne purchased the friendship of the Jews. From Alexander Balas, who succeeded with his help, in dislodging Demetrius I, he obtained the title "king's friend," with the insignia which admitted him to the royal circle, the purple and the diadem. From the same hand, he received the office of high priest, which had by this time degenerated into an affair so purely political that the people were troubled

by no sense of incongruity when, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the consecrated garments were hastily assumed by Jonathan, who, almost in the same breath, "gathered together forces and provided much arms."

By the winter of B. C. 142-143, Jonathan had played his game so well that he was the recognized ruler of Judea; three provinces of Samaria had been added to his territory; all the Syrian garrisons except two, one at Gazara and the other occupying the citadel at Jerusalem, had been removed and the warrior high priest and his brother Simon were loaded with honors by the Syrian king, Demetrius II.

The envy and distrust of Trypho, the Syrian guardian of young Antiochus VI, brought the successful life of Jonathan to a violent close. He was told by the jealous Syrian, that in view of their close friendship, the maintenance of so large a Jewish army was quite unnecessary. Jonathan was deceived and met the army of Trypho at Ptolemais with a force of only a thousand men. His soldiers were cut down, and he himself was carried away under cover of a heavy snow-storm to the obscure village east of the Jordan, where with his sons, he met his fate at the hands of an assassin. His body was finally recovered by his brother Simon and carried to Modin, where a splendid monument, whose seven

stately towers might be seen far and near, from sea and land, was erected above the last resting-place of the Maccabean family.

Simon was now the only surviving son of Mattathias, and upon his shoulders fell the mantles of the diplomatic Jonathan and of the nobler Judas and Mattathias. Confusion and strife were still prevalent in Syria, and Simon easily obtained from King Demetrius II, who was hard-pressed by his rival Trypho, a continuance of the privileges bestowed upon Jonathan, with one important addition, the remission of all outstanding taxes and the promise of entire freedom from tribute for all time to come. By throwing off this last shackle of Syrian despotism, Judea had freed herself from the yoke of the Gentiles. Only one step was needed to complete the work commenced by Jonathan, the removal of the two remaining Syrian garrisons. Gazara was captured by Simon, and his son John Hyrcanus was made its governor. Finally, on the 23rd of May, B. C. 142, the inmates of the citadel at Jerusalem were starved into submission and the fortress, so long regarded by the Jews as the "fiend incarnate," the "Satan of the holy city," was entered by Simon and his troops amid great rejoicing.

According to Josephus, the people were called together, and it was decreed in solemn assembly

that this "Beelzebub" of Israel be utterly demolished, "decapitated, as it were," that it might never again rear its head in haughty insolence above the Temple Mount. By the constant and arduous labor of many hands, for three years both night and day, it was reduced to the level of the surrounding plain, over which the Temple Mount at last held undisputed sway.

The years which followed were peaceful and prosperous. If the ability of Jonathan had commanded the admiration of the people, it was Simon upon whom they bestowed their confidence and affection. "He was a genuinely pontifical and at the same time a genuinely royal figure. Upon his venerable gray head, tiara and crown could be joined without any evident impropriety." His sane, broad-minded rule which looked well to both the secular and spiritual interests of his kingdom was pleasing alike to the worldly and the pious. He fulfilled the prediction of the aged Mattathias by being a father to them all. First Maccabees draws a pleasant picture of the happy homes, the placid and contented old age, the active and wholesome youth which prevailed beneath his reign. The long-neglected fields were again tilled and fruitful, the poor cared for, the wicked punished, and the temple beautified. A few Jewish coins, shekels and half-shekels, still in existence, are believed by experts to have been stamped in

the reign of Simon, and documents and treaties were henceforth dated from the year of Simon, high priest and prince and governor of the Jews.

The transference of the office of high priest from the house of Aaron to the house of Asmon was a transgression of the law of Moses, and, as such, could not fail to be questioned by the more orthodox. To ratify the change, a solemn assembly of priests, princes, and people was convoked, and it was resolved that the office of high priest be conferred upon Simon and his descendants forever. The decree was written upon brazen tablets, and placed in the courts of the temple; but the framers, half-frightened at their own audacity, added in self-protection the saving clause "until a prophet should be sent from God to show them a better way."

Jonathan had taken the precaution to cement the friendship of the Jews and the Romans by renewing the first treaty between the two nations, and Simon also sent ambassadors to Rome to beg for a renewal of the old alliance. The messengers carried with them as a present to the Roman Senate a magnificent golden shield weighing a thousand pounds, and in return received a promise of amity from the Roman authorities, who also sent letters to the kings of the surrounding countries, commanding them to respect the authority of Simon, the high priest of the Jews,

and to refrain from waging war against him.

The last years of Simon's reign were troubled by war with Antiochus Sidetes of Syria. Simon was prevented by his great age from taking the field, but his sons, who were skilful generals, conquered the Syrian army, and brought the disturbance to a speedy close. It seemed as if the long and honorable life of the aged high priest might be crowned with a peaceful death, but it was otherwise ordained. While inspecting the fortresses of his kingdom with his two sons, he visited his son-in-law Ptolemy, a wealthy and ambitious youth, who was commandant of the fortress of Dok. The three guests were royally entertained at a great banquet given in their honor. At its close, while the feasters were still under the influence of wine, they were treacherously assassinated by the order of their scheming host, who wished to become king of Judea.

The would-be usurper next sent his tools to Gazara to take the life of John Hyrcanus, the eldest surviving son and natural successor of Simon; but John, who was informed by messengers of his brother-in-law's plan, had the murderers arrested and hastened to Jerusalem, whence he marched with an army upon the fortress of Dok to avenge the death of his father and two brothers. Ptolemy had in some way captured John's

mother, and, to curb her son's zeal, the aged lady was placed half-naked upon the walls of the fortress and scourged until the blood ran. The heartless son-in-law threatened to hurl his victim from the dizzy height if her son prolonged the siege, and although, with a spirit worthy of the family into which she had married, she declared herself ready to endure any torture if only her husband's murderer might be fittingly punished, John, who could not bear the sight of her suffering, gave up his first plan and contented himself with barricading the fortress. The coming of the Sabbatical year soon forbade further warfare, and Ptolemy fled from Judea, but not until his aged captive had shared the fate of her two sons and her husband.

Soon after John's return from the fortress of Dok, he was attacked by Antiochus Sidetes, who had never given up his plans for the conquest of Palestine; and in the war which followed, the Jews lost their newly-won independence and were again compelled to pay tribute and furnish troops for a Syrian king. These were comparatively moderate terms, and as the records indicate that all Judea was overrun and conquered by the Syrian troops, it is probable that they were obtained only by the timely interference of Rome. In B. C. 129, Antiochus Sidetes died and his successors were weak and degenerate princes so

completely occupied by their own petty quarrels that John had little reason to fear them.

To guard against further emergencies, however, he gathered a large army of mercenaries, and bent his entire energy toward strengthening the condition of his kingdom and widening its borders. Three ancient enemies of Israel were subdued by him. First the Moabites, living on the east side of the river Jordan, were conquered and the land of Moab was made a part of Judea; next the Samaritan capital of Shechem was taken by John's army, and the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim, long the rival of the temple at Jerusalem, was utterly destroyed; then the Edomites, whose hatred of Israel dated back to the time when their ancestor Esau was deprived of his rightful inheritance by the crafty Jacob, were compelled to receive the rite of circumcision and the Jewish law; and finally, after a long and severe siege, the ancient city of Samaria was razed to the ground, and the neighboring streams were diverted from their natural course and directed across its ruined site.

The history of the Jews and Samaritans had long run in parallel lines. In the latter half of the eighth century B. C., the Israelites who lived in Samaria were carried as captives to Babylon and heathen colonists were imported in large numbers by the King of Assyria to inhabit the

thinly populated land. The immigrants suffered from the depredations of the wild beasts which overran the country, and, doubtless at the suggestion of a few remaining Israelites who had escaped captivity and with whom they had intermarried, they begged the King of Assyria to send them a priest to teach them how to worship the God of the land, that the offended Deity might be appeased and remove this sign of his displeasure. Their request was granted, and a mixed religion, half-heathen, half-Jewish, was adopted by the mixed population. The Pentateuch became their sacred book, and an expected Messiah their cherished hope. When the Jews returned from exile and began to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans asked for a share in the work. The contempt with which their request was refused resulted in a fierce and lasting enmity between the two races, haughty disdain on the part of the Jews, and the reluctant and imperfect imitation sometimes rendered by a subordinate to an envied and hated superior, on the part of the Samaritans, of whom Josephus declared "that when the Jews are in adversity, they deny that they are of kin to them; but when they perceive that some good fortune has befallen them, they immediately pretend to have communion with them, saying that they belong to them."

Historical events prove that the Jewish his-

torian's opinion was founded upon fact. When the Jews asked Alexander the Great for freedom from tribute during the Sabbatical year, the Samaritans, as their relatives, declared themselves entitled to the same privilege. Samaritan colonists followed the Jews to Egypt and Samaritan and Jewish colonies were planted side by side; but during the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, the Samaritans disowned all relationship with the Jews, allowing the mad monarch to dedicate the temple on Mt. Gerizim to the Olympian Jupiter, and giving the new patron a warm welcome. After the destruction of the temple on Mt. Gerizim, a new temple was erected in Shechem, and at the time of the events recorded in the New Testament, the Samaritans still hated and imitated the Jews, reverencing their sacred books and maintaining a lax worship of their God.

John Hyrcanus now reigned over a greater kingdom than any Jewish monarch since the glorious days of David and Solomon; but as the body of the kingdom grew and waxed strong, the fine spirit of faith and heroism which had sustained the Maccabees through the horrors of the persecution and the gallant struggle which succeeded it, deteriorated into a respectable and successful materialism. Spiritual welfare was pushed more and more into the background, and

secular prosperity engrossed the attention of high priest and nobles. In the ancient days of Israel's prosperity, the ambitious designs of Jewish kings had been checked by high priest or prophet, but now the supremacy of both church and state, a heavy weight, rested in the unrestrained hands of one man. The name of the reigning prince was stamped upon the coins of the realm, and coins still extant prove that throughout the years of his long reign, John was constantly becoming more and more like the Syrian despots of the surrounding provinces, the inscription "Jochanan the high priest and the congregation of the Jews" on earlier coins becoming upon those issued at a later date, "Jochanan the high priest and chief of the congregation of the Jews."

The worldly nature of John's policy excited the antagonism of the pious, who in his reign first made their appearance as Pharisees. The Pharisees or Separatists sprang from the seed sown by Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century B. C. Their peculiar conception of duty to God, the observance of not only the law of Moses, but also of all the minute and petty details of the oral tradition, was their idol, and upon its altar, they willingly sacrificed worldly prosperity and political ambition. Opposed to the Pharisees were the Sadducees, the priestly class from whose ranks

the high priest was chosen. They were the nobles and aristocrats of Judea who labored for its political advancement, and cared comparatively little for either law or religion. They chose to be comfortable in this world rather than endure discomforts by which they might gain the promised blessings of a doubtful world to come, and when any question arose between serving an earthly and a heavenly king, decided without hesitation in favor of the former.

The original Maccabees, from the very nature of the struggle, must necessarily be the friends and adherents of the Pharisees, but when the policy of their successors became one of political aggrandizement, they were obliged to depend upon Sadducees for support.

A legendary anecdote is told of the break between John Hyrcanus and the Pharisees. A great banquet was given by the king to the Pharisees and the tables were spread with food which should recall the difference between past and present. As they sat about the board upon which the roots and herbs which had been the humble fare of the Maccabean rebels, were placed side by side with the sumptuous viands upon which the court of John Hyrcanus dined daily, the king begged his guests to correct him if in any way he had done that which was displeasing to God or transgressed the law which

was their rule for a righteous life. A shower of flattery, broken only by one dissenting voice, followed his request. A certain Eleazar, a Pharisee, replied "If you would know the truth, O king, renounce the high-priesthood and be content with the principality." Eleazar's exposure of the truth made the king very angry, for he well knew that only a descendant of the house of Aaron was eligible to the office of high priest. At the suggestion of Jonathan, a Sadducee, he tested the loyalty of the Pharisees by asking them what punishment should be inflicted upon Eleazar for his impertinence. The answer was, "Forty stripes save one," and as the king felt that banishment or death would be a more fitting punishment for so grave a misdemeanor, he henceforth distrusted the Pharisees and became the friend and ally of the Sadducees.

John Hyrcanus was so powerful a king that the Pharisees were completely dominated by him. His long and able reign of thirty-one years cannot fail to command our admiration and respect, but, at its close, unrestrained power and untempered materialism had given the downhill course of the house of Asmon such impetus that we find in the sons who succeeded him two of the most vicious and degraded characters of Jewish history.

Aristobulus, his eldest son and successor, was

the first of the Asmonean princes to wear the diadem and assume the title King of the Jews. Varied reports of his career have been handed down to us. He was the avowed friend and disciple of the Greeks, whose historians praise his goodness and humanity, but Josephus asserts that his short reign was lurid with crime. His account tells us that John Hyrcanus had appointed his widow as his successor, but that she was imprisoned and starved to death by her inhuman son when she asserted her claim to the throne; also that he imprisoned three of his brothers and murdered a fourth in a fit of suspicious jealousy.

When Aristobulus died, after a brief reign of one year, his brothers were released from prison by his widow, Alexandra Salome, and the elder, Alexander Jannæus, became high priest and king. In accordance with the dictates of the Jewish law, the widow of the dead king became the wife of the reigning Alexander, a worthless reprobate, whose long reign was a series of uninteresting intrigues and petty wars in which he showed no marked ability and was often unsuccessful. It was utterly revolting to the Pharisees that this young man, who spent his life in carousals with vulgar associates, should rule the chosen people of God and should officiate at their sacred ceremonies; and when, at the Feast

of Tabernacles, he poured out the sacred libation with a sneering remark, they could no longer conceal their disrespect, but openly pelted him with citron they had brought for a sacrifice. Alexander summoned his hired soldiers, and six hundred Jews perished in the massacre which followed. A wooden barricade was erected about the altar, and by its shelter the high priest was protected from further expression of his people's regard when he performed the duties of his sacred office.

Bitter hostility and a long war in which the Pharisees were joined by Demetrius Eukairos, was the result of the outbreak. First one side and then the other won temporary advantages, but the conflict ended in the defeat of the Pharisees. To celebrate his victory, the high priest and king crucified eight hundred Pharisees and tortured and killed wives and children before the eyes of his dying victims. At the same hour, he gave his mistresses and dancers a great feast, and entertained them by the sight of the dreadful spectacle.

Alexander's misrule was ended in his forty-eighth year, when he died of an illness which was the result of his licentious life. Jewish annals tell us that he repented on his death-bed and advised his wife, Alexandra, to whom he left his

kingdom, to become the ally of the Pharisees and to be guided by them.

Queen Alexandra was the sister of Simon ben Shetach, the famous Pharisee, and was a conscientious and God-fearing woman. Josephus characterizes her reign as follows: "She had indeed the name of regent, but the Pharisees had the authority, for it was they who restored such as were banished and set such as were prisoners at liberty, and to say all at once, they differed nothing from lords." On the whole, the people, over whom the Pharisees exerted a tremendous influence, were well-pleased with the peace and abundance of Alexandra's reign. It was described in the Pharisaic tradition as a golden age in which even the fruits of the soil were miraculously blessed by the piety and goodness of the queen. Under Simon ben Shetach, and Queen Salome, "rain fell on the eve of the Sabbath, so that corns of wheat were as large as kidneys, the barley corns as large as olives, and the lentils like golden denarii; the scribes gathered such corns, and preserved specimens of them in order to show future generations what sin entails."

CHAPTER VII

THE RIVAL CLAIMANTS FOR THE JEWISH THRONE

The Pharisaic Queen Alexandra had two sons. The elder, Hyrcanus, was the friend of the Pharisees and had officiated as high priest during the nine years of his mother's reign. Of colorless and insipid personality, insignificant in both appearance and character, he was thrust by the accident of inheritance into the conspicuous niche which he could never fill, and much less adorn. Aristobulus, the younger son, was the favorite and stirring leader of the gay young Sadducees of Judea. He was capable and ambitious, in every way a contrast to his indolent elder brother.

It was contrary to every law of human supremacy save that of birth that the energetic younger brother should submit to the feeble rule of the elder, and already, during his mother's last illness, Aristobulus, with his band of young nobles, had taken possession of the most important strongholds in Judea with the

intention of making the sovereign power his own when the time should be ripe for action. Hyrcanus had no sooner been formally crowned high priest and king after his mother's death, than he was attacked by Aristobulus, and so badly beaten in a battle at Jericho that he was thoroughly intimidated and hastily sought refuge behind the sheltering walls of the citadel at Jerusalem, whence he sent a messenger to arrange terms of peace. An agreement was soon reached, for Hyrcanus, who had been reminded of his various deficiencies with brotherly frankness, was easily persuaded to exchange places with Aristobulus; to give up his public position, retaining only the property he had acquired; and to acknowledge his brother high priest and king in his stead. The treaty was ratified in a public gathering at the temple, and the two brothers, after exchanging oaths and embracing before the assembled people, departed thence, Aristobulus to the royal palace, and Hyrcanus, now a private individual, to the former home of Aristobulus. As a final precaution, the terms of the contract were cemented by the betrothal of Alexander, the eldest son of Aristobulus, to Alexandra, the daughter and only child of the deposed Hyrcanus.

Hyrcanus had hardly begun, in perfect contentment to live the life of harmless mediocrity

to which he was consigned, when its even tenor was broken by the disturbing influence of one who was to wrest the rudder of the storm-tossed Jewish ship of state from the unsteady hands of the Asmonean kings; Antipater the Edomite, best known to history as the father of Herod the Great. The father of this descendant of the defrauded Esau had been appointed governor of Edom (or Idumea) by Alexander Jannaeus, and his son, as his successor, had become a prominent figure in the court of the Jewish sovereigns. He was clever and unprincipled and possessed, in the superlative degree, eyes keen to discern in each man the hidden spring which controls action, and presence of mind to touch it with deft fingers at the critical moment. By tact and diplomacy, he had gained a large following of prominent Jews and of the Arabian chiefs whose territory bordered upon Idumea. As he saw in the weakling Hyrcanus a tool with which he might fashion for himself a high seat in Judea, he espoused the cause of this second disinherited elder brother of the seed of Abraham; the two became life-long friends and the image of the Idumean's sinister designs was henceforth the central figure in the mind of Hyrcanus, which, mirror-like, reflected the thought and purpose of the last passer-by.

To make trouble for Aristobulus and excite

sympathy for his friend, Antipater was constantly intimating that the latter had been unfairly treated. He lost no opportunity to circulate false reports in regard to Aristobulus and persistently reminded the elder prince of his lost inheritance, audaciously suggesting that on account of his younger brother's enmity, his life was no longer safe in Judea. The insinuations of Antipater finally had the desired effect; Hyrcanus was induced to flee with him to the country of his friend and ally, the powerful Arabian chief Aretas. By promising to restore the twelve cities taken from the Arabians by Alexander Jannaeus, the rebels persuaded Aretas to join them, and with their combined forces, they marched back into Judea. Aristobulus was met and defeated, his fickle soldiers deserted in large numbers to the victors, and with a following of only a few faithful priests, he fled to that refuge of all distressed Asmoneans, the temple fortress, where he was besieged by Aretas and the victorious Pharisees. Two incidents of the siege related by Josephus indicate that Jewish piety was fast becoming the empty shell of its former self.

A virtuous priest, Onias by name, whose prayer for rain in time of a severe drought had been followed by abundant showers, was commanded by the Pharisees to invoke the displeasure of God

upon the party of Aristobulus. He at first refused, but when he was compelled to speak, reluctantly arose, and uttered this prayer in the presence of the assembled people. "O God, the King of the whole world, since those that stand now with me are Thy people, and those that are besieged are also Thy priests, I beseech Thee that Thou wilt neither harken to the prayers of those against these, nor bring to effect what these pray against those." Whereupon he was stoned by the wicked Pharisees and paid with his life for his brave neutrality.

The date of the passover occurred soon after the death of Onias Aristobulus and his friends could procure no lambs for a paschal offering in the besieged city. They begged the besieging party to provide them with animals for the needed sacrifice, promising them in return any sum of money they might ask. When the exorbitant amount of a thousand pieces of silver had been named as the price of a single lamb, the money was let down over the walls of the city to the Pharisees, who coolly pocketed it, and the cheated priests waited in vain for the promised sacrifice.

While the rival claimants for the Jewish throne were entrenched, one within and one without the besieged city of Jerusalem, Pompey, the Roman imperator, was daily winning fresh

victories in his contest for the dictatorship of the East, which had been gradually slipping from the hands of Rome. Already he had sent advance lieutenants into Syria which, torn by internal strife and dismembered by the hostile tribes which encircled it, was soon to fall an easy prey to the Roman commander and his army.

Reports of the strife in Judea had reached Scaurus, Pompey's advance lieutenant in Syria, and he hastened into Palestine to have a hand in the matter; for Rome, the mistress of the world, must assert her authority even in this remote corner of her domain. Scaurus was met by ambassadors from Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, who both promised him equally large sums of money for the favor and aid of Rome. His decision was characteristic of the Roman of his day. Aristobulus was preferred because he was better able to pay the promised bribe. The money was accepted, the siege raised, and Aretas sent home with the threat that if his hostility were continued, he would be pronounced the enemy of the Roman people. But such mild disposal of his foes was far from satisfactory to the fiery Aristobulus. With his followers, he pursued Aretas to Papyron, where a battle was fought in which six thousand Pharisees and Arabians were killed.

The coming of Pompey, which occurred about a year later, was awaited by the Jews with eager

interest, for Judea was still without a king, and the choice of the great Roman was to be final. While the arbiter of Jewish fate was still at Damascus, he was met by messengers who bore as a gift from Aristobulus, a golden vine worth five hundred talents in gold, of such rare beauty and exquisite workmanship that for years it was deemed worthy of a conspicuous place in the Roman Capitol.

In the following spring, Damascus witnessed the first memorable meeting of the Roman and Jewish potentates. The chief justice in this tribunal before which the Jewish princes were to plead their cause was the handsome and engaging Roman in whom honesty and ambition strove ever for the mastery. Fresh from his victory over the pirates of the Mediterranean, and his yet more brilliant victory over Mithridates, his thirst for power and conquest was still unappeased; he was still seeking new adventures and novel experiences, still looking for new worlds to conquer. The appearance of the suppliants before the bar of justice was characteristic. Aristobulus entered Damascus surrounded by all the tinsel and glitter of Oriental royalty. He was accompanied by a band of young cavaliers who, with their scarlet mantles, long curling hair, and gay trappings, appeared "not as though they were to plead their cause in a court of justice, but as

if they were marching in a pompous procession." Antipater was, as always, the commanding figure and spokesman in the party of the insignificant Hyrcanus. On account of his hated Idumean blood, the wily Edomite dared not openly declare himself a candidate for the throne of Judea, but by making Hyrcanus his echo, he had become the real, if not the acknowledged rival and opponent of the war-like Aristobulus. He did not hesitate to accuse the younger prince of persistently stirring up sedition and rebellion; he even implied that Aristobulus had been allied with the pirates of the Mediterranean just conquered by Pompey, and his arraignment was confirmed by no less than a thousand Jews of good standing whom he had brought as witnesses. There was yet a third party of suppliants, almost disregarded at the time, but destined later to become a ruling faction, to whom the worldliness and strife of the kingly government had become obnoxious and who wished to re-establish the old theocratic order of priests.

The showy parade of Aristobulus and his followers was wholly offensive to Pompey, who still retained the simple tastes of the early Romans. It was apparent from the very first that Hyrcanus was to be preferred and that the wily and agreeable Edomite was better fitted to cope with Rome than his outspoken and impetuous opponent; but

with the hesitation for which he was distinguished, the emperor still deferred the final decision.

Pompey's wide-spread fame for humanity and justice had inspired the confidence of Aristobulus, but like many others who had looked to the great Roman "for guidance in their perplexities and deliverance from danger, found there was neither light nor leading in the idol he had set up for worship." Half-distracted, he fluctuated between pride and fear. His better judgment told him that opposition to Rome was futile, his pride that the humiliation of surrender would be unendurable. In a fit of desperation, he shut himself up in the fortress of Alexandrium, and there defied the Roman conqueror. When, however, his countrymen entreated him not to make war against the Romans, and Pompey commanded him to capitulate, he yielded hoping against hope that the preference of the Roman commander might yet be his; but finding that his expectations were unwarranted, he again became reckless, retired to Jerusalem, closed the gates of the city and prepared for war. Pompey and his Roman legions advanced upon the holy city, and again the pride of Aristobulus yielded to his fear. He went to Pompey in person, begged his forgiveness and threw himself upon his mercy, promising him a large sum of money and a peaceful entrance

into Jerusalem. But when the followers of Aristobulus declined to fulfill his promise, and Pompey's lieutenant was refused admittance to the city, the patience of the Roman commander gave way. Too proud to submit, too faithless to be a loyal ally, and too powerless to control his own soldiers, Aristobulus had displayed his instability at every turn. He was thrown into chains, and the Romans prepared to besiege the city. Hyrcanus and his followers opened the gates of Jerusalem to their Roman friends, and assisted them in every possible way, but the patriots, angered by the capture of their king, opposed the Romans in the temple fortress. For three months the siege continued. Then the patriots' faithful observance of the Sabbath caused their downfall. During the sacred day of rest, the Romans were able for the first time to raise an embankment on which to place their battering-rams, and one of the great towers tottered and fell beneath the shower of great stones which rained down upon it. Cornelius, the son of the dictator Sulla, was the first man to scale the walls and enter the fortress through the breach. Swarms of Roman soldiers, embittered by the stubborn resistance of the patriots, followed him, and there ensued one of those dreadful massacres all too frequent in the history of Jerusalem. Twelve thousand citizens were slain. Mad with horror and despair,

many of the conquered threw themselves over precipitous cliffs or set fire to their houses and perished in the flames. The priests in the black robes which replaced the white garments of happier days refused to leave their post, and were cut down as they sat motionless around the temple altar.

Led by curiosity, through the courts of the temple, past the sacred candlestick, the golden table of shew bread, and consecrated treasury which contained at this time no less than two thousand talents in gold, Pompey and his soldiers paused at last before the threshold of the Holy of Holies, beyond which even the audacious feet of Antiochus Epiphanes had never passed. It was a time of unrest and expansion in Rome, when men felt the need of a wider life and broader range of thought. Greek philosophy and Oriental superstition, even the religion of an ally in remote Judea, were subjects for speculation and discussion; and since reports of the quarrel of the rival princes had reached the ears of Rome, many had been the conjectures in Roman schools of philosophy as to who and what the God of the Jews might be. Was the object of Jewish veneration, as rumour said, the head of an ass, the venerable law giver himself with his long beard and tables of stone, the golden cherubim which had been stolen and carried away

to Babylon, or a marble god in human form like those which adorned the altar of the Roman capitol? Pompey drew aside the curtain which concealed the truth, and the empty and silent room where sincere high priests had communed with the invisible Jehovah, stood revealed. With the sight of that quiet inner shrine, Rome received her first conception of a God so high and holy that He transcended human thought and that any attempted representation of Him formed by human hands would have seemed a profanation to His followers. With an honesty which the Roman officials of his day rarely possessed, Pompey left the treasures of the temple quite untouched, and graciously commanded that all traces of contamination produced by his entrance be removed.

The Jews were now at the mercy of their conquerors. The leaders of the insurrection were executed, and Judea, stripped of all the territory acquired by the Asmonean monarchs, became once again a tributary state. Hyrcanus was appointed vassal high priest, and Aristobulus with his children was taken captive to Italy, where with three hundred and sixty-two other captive princes, he graced the greatest triumph that Rome had ever witnessed. The golden vine with which he had hoped to purchase the favor of Rome was displayed on the car which bore the

spoils of the campaign, and as he walked with his children before the chariot of the victorious Pompey, his beauty and noble bearing so attracted the attention of the Roman populace that they bestowed upon him the title, "Our Hero of Jerusalem."

Aristobulus and his children were retained in Rome as hostages; and the Judean captives of inferior rank who had been transported in large numbers, and at their release, had lacked either the means or the disposition to return to their native land, settled on the further bank of the Tiber. There they formed the nucleus of that community of Jews who so excited the interest of the Romans that their peculiar customs and religious observances became the theme of which Horace and other Latin authors frequently wrote. The colony formed by these humble captives increased constantly in size and exerted an influence, of which their Roman captors had not dreamed, for from the community thus established sprang, a century later, the Christian church of Rome.

Although the spirit of self-sacrifice and faith in God which had glorified the patriotism of the original Maccabees was long since dead, their courage still lived in their captured descendants, who were determined not to submit without a struggle. In B. C. 57, Alexander, the elder son

of Aristobulus, who had escaped from his captors on the way to Rome, became the leader of an uprising in Judea. He received the enthusiastic support of his countrymen, and gained one or two victories, but was soon obliged to surrender by Gabinius, who, to prevent further rebellion, deprived the high priest of all political power, and divided the country into five districts, each governed by its own sanhedrin. In the following year, Aristobulus with his son Antigonus, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of their Roman guards, and fleeing to Judea, took refuge in the fortress of Alexandrium where the Jewish prince had once before defied the Romans, only to find as before that resistance was useless and independence impossible. As a punishment for his audacity, he was sentenced to a life of solitary confinement in Rome, but his children were set free by the Roman senate. In B. C. 55, Alexander made a last desperate attempt to regain the kingdom wrested from his father, but again met with discomfiture and defeat at the hands of the Romans.

Little beyond a few scattered dates is known of the period succeeding these insurrections. In B. C. 55, Crassus, the Roman triumvir, sacked the Jewish temple, and when six years later, the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey took place, Judea, like other Roman provinces, was compelled

to bear a heavy burden of hardship and expense. During this war, Cæsar released Aristobulus and was about to send him into Judea at the head of two Roman legions when the stormy life of the Jewish prince was ended by a dose of poison from the hands of Pompey's adherents. His son Alexander was at the same time executed in Antioch by the command of Pompey.

After Cæsar's victory at Pharsalia had brought the civil war to a close, Antipater, who since the surrender of Jerusalem to the Romans had possessed what little power the Romans had thought best to entrust to the Jews, with Hyrcanus did everything in his power to win the favor of the victor. They were so successful that Antipater's tortuous career was crowned by the honor he had long desired. He was made procurator of Judea and the office of ethnarch was conferred upon Hyrcanus. The divisions established by Gabinius were abolished, the Jews were allowed to rebuild the city walls destroyed by Pompey, and such favors were bestowed upon the nation by Cæsar that at his death, he is said to have been more sincerely mourned by them than by any other class of his subjects.

CHAPTER VIII

HEROD THE GREAT

Even when Herod the Great was yet a lad in school, an Essenian soothsayer, attracted by the remarkable strength and beauty of the boy, slapped the wondering child on the back and proclaimed to him his future destiny as King of the Jews. At twenty-five, or, according to some historians, at fifteen, he was made governor of Galilee by his father, Antipater, an office in which he found ample outlet for his tremendous energy of mind and body; and at sixty, he led a campaign against the Arabians with unimpaired vigor. Like the original Esau, he was a "mighty hunter." It is said that in one day's hunt he slew not less than thirty stags, bears, and wild asses; and in archery and throwing the lance, he excelled all the youth of his generation. In stature and personal appearance, he was superb. Assassins who had planned to surprise and kill him in the bath, fled in fright at the sight of his unarmed and unclothed majesty.

His qualities of mind and heart were not less

unusual than his physical strength. He both loved and ill-treated the members of his own family with the same passionate intensity, and his crimes against them were followed by fits of overwhelming remorse. In spite of the vice and cruelty of his later years, many of the servants who had become attached to him in his youth were faithful to him throughout his entire life. Among them was his private secretary and constant companion, Nicolaus of Damascus, one of the foremost scholars of the age, and the author of a world's history in one hundred and forty-four volumes. Other scholars gathered about him and his interest in Greek culture made his court a center of Greek learning where his taste for history and philosophy were gratified by after dinner discussions with the learned men of the day. Architecture was his especial delight, and, beneath his generous patronage, masterpieces in building sprang up not only in Palestine, but in many cities of Asia Minor and Greece.

From his father Antipater, he inherited the qualities which had made the latter a successful leader of men,—the ability to discern men's motives and presence of mind to use them to his own advantage. Like Antipater, he had the wisdom to conciliate where he could not compel, to win by competent service and faithful friendship where force of arms would have been useless. But

selfishness, and unrestrained passion lay coiled like twin canker-worms at the base of all his budding virtues, all the more gross because of the very vehemence and intensity of the nature upon which they fed. Like Esau, he sold his spiritual birth-right for a mess of pottage, the pottage of wealth, power and fame.

The young governor of Gallilee found his domain infested with bands of Jewish insurgents who terrorized the border villages of Syria by their lawless incursions, and was so successful in hunting down and killing the brigands that ballads in praise of his courage were sung throughout Syria. But in Judea his daring assumed a different aspect. The court of Hyrcanus, the high priest, was thronged with weeping mothers, who begged redress for sons slain without a trial and without a sentence; and when, at length, the robber chief, a youth of noble family, was summarily captured and killed, Hyrcanus was obliged, though much against his will, to summon his friend Antipater's son before the Sanhedrin to answer for his life. As it was customary for the accused to appear before the court in robes of mourning and with dishevelled hair, the august body was hushed into silence by the appearance of one who entered the assembly chamber with the air and bearing of a young prince. Herod was clad in purple, and his long black hair was magnificently

dressed. He was accompanied by a guard of Roman soldiers, and bore a message from Sextus Cæsar, legate of Syria, commanding his acquittal. In the presence of such boldness and splendor, only one member of the council had the courage to speak. Shammai, a Pharisee of high repute, broke the silence by declaring that the audacious demeanor of the culprit foreboded evil and that his fellow councillors would one day answer for their neglect with their lives, should they fail to punish him, a warning which was recalled when Herod, upon becoming King of Judea, ordered the execution of forty-five leading Sadducees, all of whom were probably members of the Sanhedrin. To avert the impending sentence of death, Hyrcanus hastily adjourned the assembly and advised the culprit to leave Jerusalem without delay. His advice was taken, but Herod, with characteristic buoyancy, soon reappeared at the head of an army and was with great difficulty restrained by his father from inflicting a terrible vengeance upon the authors of his indignity. Of so little consequence was the life and authority of the Jews to Rome that even during his trial, the offender had been pronounced ruler of Coele-Syria by the Roman governor of Syria.

In B. C. 44, the death of Cæsar threw the Roman Empire into confusion, and Cassius came into Syria to collect an army. Antipater, with

Hyrchanus, hastened to propitiate the murderer of their former friend and patron with vast sums of money wrung from the citizens of Judea, and four cities were sold into slavery because they were unable to pay their share of the contribution. Antipater enjoyed the patronage for which he had paid this heavy price only a year. In B. C. 43, he was poisoned by a rival, Malichus, and died bequeathing to his sons, Phasael and Herod, not only the government of Palestine, but also the legacy of accumulated hatred and distrust which his policy had inspired. Jewish uprisings in Galilee and Jerusalem followed his death, and to make matters worse, a delegation of Jews had been sent to Rome to bring accusations of a most serious nature against Herod and Phasael.

In the meantime, the kaleidoscope of Roman history had again changed. Cassius, Brutus, and Sextus Cæsar had been swept from their high places, and all Asia had fallen into the hands of Mark Antony, the boyhood friend of Herod. When Herod appeared to defend himself, he found in the Roman ruler, the congenial comrade of his younger days, a friendship doubtless reinforced by the huge bribes with which the Edomite had learned to enlist the sympathy of the Romans. The aged high priest Hyrchanus also came before Antony to plead the cause of his friend Antipater's sons, and the hearing re-

sulted in the complete acquittal of the two offenders and their appointment as tetrachs of Judea.

In his extreme youth, Herod had married a woman of his own race, Doris, by whom he had one son, Antipater; but the romance of his life was his love for the beautiful and high-spirited Mariamne, a flower that had bloomed late upon the now fast withering stalk of Asmon. This princess, the grand-daughter of both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, united in herself the rival claims of the two branches of the the house of Asmon; and as the hatred of the Jews for Rome and its Idumean supporters and their undying devotion to the Maccabean family was a danger which, like the sword suspended by a single hair above the head of Damocles, constantly threatened to fall upon Herod and destroy him, a union with this descendant of the Maccabees was a matter of policy as well as love.

The betrothal had not long taken place when events occurred by which it was to be indefinitely prolonged. Antigonus, the only remaining son of the lamented captive king Aristobulus, had long desired to fan the smouldering embers of Jewish patriotism into a flame. He found the opportunity he sought in an alliance with the hordes of Parthians who had descended upon Asia, and were now sweeping everything before them, and promised the Parthian king a thousand

talents in gold and five hundred of the fairest Jewish maidens if he would restore to him the kingdom of his fathers.

His offer was accepted. Multitudes of Parthians entered Judea and surrounded Jerusalem; Hyrcanus and Phasael were decoyed into the Parthian camp and taken prisoners; Mark Antony was detained in Egypt by the wiles of Cleopatra; and Herod must face innumerable Parthians and his own hostile subjects alone. Resistance could result only in ruin and disaster, and flight, encumbered with the defenseless women whom he could not leave exposed to the barbarity of the invaders, was equally perilous. Yet he resolved without hesitation upon the latter, and in the dead of night with a caravan of weeping charges, his affianced bride and the women and children of his own family, he started upon that journey whose thrilling adventures and desperate chances were so often recalled during the security of his later life. Sixty furlongs from Jerusalem he was attacked by hostile Jews and fought hand to hand for his life in an encounter so fierce that it was commemorated by the palace and city of Herodium, which he built years after, upon the scene of the conflict; and again when the delay occasioned by an overturned wagon imperilled the safety of his party, he became desperate and was dissuaded with difficulty from tak-

ing his life with his own hands. In spite of the frequent skirmishes and difficulties of the way, the caravan finally reached Idumea in safety, and the women and children were left at the rock-bound fortress of Masada with Herod's brother Joseph. But his own journey was still unended. He must seek the aid of friends more powerful than himself. From the court of the Arabian king, whence he was driven as a fugitive, he hastened to Egypt, where he received the aid and escaped the web of Cleopatra; thence he sailed through storm and shipwreck to Rome; and again he was cordially received and saved from ruin by his old friend Antony. He entered the Roman Senate a fugitive and an outcast, to beg that the sovereignty of Judea might be bestowed upon the younger brother of Mariamne; he left the senate chamber walking between Antony and Octavius, the acknowledged King of the Jews.

When Herod returned to Judea he found Antigonus established as high priest and king, and the "King of the Jews" was obliged to fight three years before he could take possession of the kingdom bestowed upon him by the Roman Senate. He learned that Phasaël had dashed his brains out in prison after the joyful news of his brother's escape had been brought to him, and

Hyrchanus had been carried away into captivity by the Parthians. The fortress Masada, which was still occupied by the women and children Herod had rescued from the invaders, was besieged by Antigonus and must be relieved; the rocky caves of Galilee must again be freed from his old enemies the brigands; and the Roman legates, who had been bribed by Antigonus, must be conciliated. It was consequently not until the spring of B. C. 37, after many adventures and hair-breadth escapes, that he had conquered all Palestine except its capital and was ready to undertake the siege of Jerusalem. After the battering-rams had been placed, Sosius came to his aid with a Roman army, and he felt so assured of his success that before the siege commenced he went to Samaria, where he celebrated his marriage with Mariamne, to whom he had been engaged five years.

After a siege of three months, the fortress fell as it had fallen twenty-six years before, upon the Sabbath, and Herod entered his capital amid plunder and frightful cruelty which spared neither age nor sex.

Antigonus hastened from the citadel, and throwing himself at the feet of Sosius, begged him with tears to spare his life; but the hard-hearted Roman, thinking a woman's name more

suitable than a man's for one who displayed such effeminate weakness, replied with scornful laughter, "Arise, Antigone," and ordered him bound.

Either because he wished to spare his subjects or because he did not wish to incur the financial loss of a plundered capital, Herod allayed the bitter enmity of the Romans with many and rich gifts, and persuaded them to vacate Jerusalem; but the spark of kindly feeling generated by his preservation of Jewish life and property was completely extinguished by the barbarity with which he commenced his reign. Forty-five of Antigonus' adherents were executed; the royal jewels and the property of wealthy citizens were confiscated, and handed over to Antony. Even the coffins of the dead were searched that no hidden treasure might escape. The flood of Jewish hatred rose so high that the author of these atrocities dared not keep Antigonus to adorn the triumph of Antony, but had him taken to Antioch, where he was the first prince of royal blood to be beaten and beheaded by the Romans like a common criminal.

To appease the people, the aged Hyrcanus was recalled from exile and made the recipient of many honors. Before his deportation, his nephew Antigonus had taken the precaution to remove his ears that he might be forever barred from the office of high priest by physical disfig-

urement, and Hananiel, an obscure priest of the Babylonian colony, was thereupon appointed to take his place.

Besides Hyrcanus, there still survived three descendants of the Maccabees; his daughter, Alexandra, an ambitious woman who had never become reconciled to the fallen fortunes of her house, and whose restless scheming did much to bring about its ruin; and her two children, Mariamne, the beautiful wife of Herod, and Aristobulus the last male representative of his house and the pride of his mother and sister. All the beauty and nobility of the original Maccabees lived again in Alexandra's children; and when the high-priesthood was bestowed upon Hananiel, both Mariamne and her mother felt that Aristobulus had been slighted and made every possible effort to secure the office for this last scion of their house. Alexandra begged her friend Cleopatra to use her influence with the all-powerful Antony, and Mariamne added her entreaties to those of her mother; Herod yielded and the sixteen-year old boy first performed the duties of his holy office in B. C. 35 at the Feast of Tabernacles, the most joyous festival of the Jewish year. When the assembled people saw the young prince, his beauty, his impressive stature, and noble bearing, enhanced by the gorgeous robes of office which he wore, he was

in face and form so like the lamented princes who had preceded him that their enthusiasm could not be restrained, and word flew from mouth to mouth that an Asmonean monarch might yet become the King of the Jews.

As a fitting close to the festal occasion, Alexandra entertained the king and the boy high priest at her castle in Jericho. The day was sultry, and the guests cooled themselves by bathing in the ponds which beautified the grounds about the palace. Aristobulus was urged by his brother-in-law to join in the sport, for among the bathers were those who understood Herod's wishes. Until evening, the boy priest gambolled in the water with the other guests. Then under cover of the growing darkness, he was drawn beneath the waves as if in play. They closed above him, and before his release, life had been extinguished. News of his death ran like wild-fire through Jerusalem, and the whole city was immersed in grief. Alexandra, in her despair, threatened to take her own life, and in the life of Mariamne a double tragedy was enacted. In spite of her finer nature which the rough Idumean could neither understand nor appreciate, he had taken her heart by storm. Now the form of the dead boy rose like an accusing ghost between them. The waves which had extinguished the life of the young prince had

quenched the fire upon the king's hearthstone. Mariamne's love for Herod had died with Aristobulus. The author of all this misery shed genuine tears when he beheld the dead face, so like that of his beautiful wife, and tried in vain to allay her grief by a magnificent funeral.

Danger and disaster now thickened about his pathway. Alexandra plotted ceaselessly to deprive him of his throne; Cleopatra became his enemy; Antony, upon whom his security depended, was defeated and killed in the battle of Actium, and the favor of Augustus was still an uncertainty. "Like a hunted animal turned to bay, his passions became fiercer, his methods more desperate." The insignificant and disfigured Hyrcanus, who in a moment of weakness had listened to the voice of his scheming daughter, now became an object of suspicion, and at the age of eighty, was tried and condemned to death.

Mariamne's coldness only increased the passionate devotion of her husband. When he was summoned to Rome to answer for the life of Aristobulus, he could not bear the thought that should he never return, she might become the wife of another. He therefore entrusted her to the care of his uncle Joseph whom he commanded to kill her immediately in case of his own death. The secret was revealed to Mari-

amne by Joseph, and Herod, upon his return, was received with growing aversion. A second time the Idumean half-Jew was obliged to leave Jerusalem to secure the favor and goodwill of Augustus; and again Mariamne learned from her attendant that his love for her had been manifested in the same peculiar way. During this absence, Augustus made Herod the recipient of especial favors. He restored to him the district around Jericho which had been taken from him by Cleopatra, and seven other cities of Palestine were annexed to his kingdom; but when he returned, radiant with triumph, and wished to share his good fortune with Mariamne, she expressed positive resentment at his success; and he who had commanded the friendship of the Roman rulers of the world was powerless in the presence of his own wife.

Nothing could have been more gratifying to Cypros and Salome, the mother and sister of Herod, than the growing breach between Mariamne and himself. The unconcealed contempt of the Jewish princess for the Idumean descent of these ladies had long provoked their fury, and the dignified silence with which she responded to their coarse abuse was more irritating than any words she could have uttered. Salome goaded Herod, already incensed by his wife's indifference, to a blind fury, by hinting

that infidelity was the cause of Mariamne's coldness. To add fuel to the fire of his jealous distrust, she poisoned the wine which the queen prepared daily, and bribed the royal cup-bearer to accuse Mariamne of the crime. The ceaseless persecution was continued until Herod was convinced of his wife's guilt, and Mariamne was tried and condemned as a result of the false charges brought against her.

Friendless and alone, deserted even by her cowardly and selfish mother, who reproached her on the way to the block as the cause of all her family's woes, the Jewish princess met her death with splendid courage. She did not utter a word of complaint or fear, her color did not change, but "she died as she had lived, a true Maccabee."

When Herod awoke from his fit of insane rage to find he had deprived himself of the being he loved best, his grief and remorse knew no bounds. He tried to drown his sorrow in excesses, prolonged drinking and hunting bouts. He sought in vain to console himself with the pretext that his loved one had not passed beyond the sound of his voice. His servants were forbidden to speak of her death, and the household was conducted as if she still occupied her apartments in the palace. At length even his great strength gave way under the prodigious strain on mind and body, and he lay ill for

months in Samaria, the scene of his early married life. The soliloquy of Herod's physician as he looks upon the stricken form of the unhappy king is reproduced in Stephen Phillips' Herod:

Rest, and a world of leaves and stealing stream
Or solemn swoon of music may allure
Homeward the ranging spirit of the king:
These things avail; but these are things of men.
To me indeed it seems, who with dim eyes
Behold this Herod motionless and mute,
To me it seems that they who grasp the world,
The kingdom and the power and the glory,
Must pay with deepest misery of spirit,
Atoning unto God for a brief brightness,
And ever ransom, like this rigid king,
The outward victory with inward loss.

Herod was roused from his despondency by the news that Alexandra plotted to steal his throne, and the scheming queen was at last condemned to the fate she had long deserved. The most brilliant period of his reign followed her death, but the loss of Mariamne had left an ineffaceable impression upon mind and body. He sought oblivion in polygamy and nine wives became inmates of his home. Two sons resembling their dead mother in face and bearing still remained to him. They were carefully educated at Rome and brilliant marriages were arranged for them that their father's high hopes for their future might be fulfilled. But when

they returned from Italy to the polluted atmosphere of that crime-stained home they could never forget that their father had consented to their mother's execution. With her beauty, they had inherited her high spirit and her aversion for their Idumean relatives. They ridiculed the senile vanity of the old king, and when they saw the inferior wives who had succeeded their mother wearing her gowns, they openly boasted that they would one day make these fine ladies wear sackcloth instead. Their imprudence roused the suspicion of Herod and involved them in endless quarrels with Salome and their wicked elder brother, Antipater, whose poisonous influence increased the bitter resentment of their unhappy father. Quarrels and reconciliations followed each other in rapid succession for eleven years. Then the pride and affection of Herod gave way before the charge of treason brought against his sons by the mischief-makers, and just thirty years from the date of Mariamne's marriage, her sons were condemned and strangled at Samaria, where her wedding had taken place.

In B. C. 4, the wicked old king, steeped in lust and cruelty, hated by his subjects and distrusted by the members of his own family, became the victim of a foul distemper, and the sulphur baths of Callirrhoe afforded him no relief. When all

hope of his recovery had been relinquished, he commanded that the most distinguished men of the nation be shut up in the arena and cut down on the day of his death. Thus only could he hope that real lamentation would occur at his own funeral. Unloved and unmourned, he died at Jericho, the sad wreck of what he might have been, and his body was borne to Herodium for interment.

The tempestuous tragedy of Herod and Mariamne, vivid with its lightning flashes of love, jealousy, hatred and remorse, has been made the subject of plays and poems, but none perhaps more true to its real spirit than "Herod's Lament for Mariamne," in which Lord Byron depicts the distracted king pacing the corridors of the desolated castle at Samaria forever haunted by the beauty and innocence of his murdered wife.

Oh Mariamne! now for thee
The heart for which thou bled'st is bleeding;
Revenge is lost in agony
And wild remorse to rage succeeding.
Oh Mariamne! where art thou?
Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading;
Ah! couldst thou—thou wouldst pardon now,
Though Heaven were to my prayer unheeding.

And is she dead?—and did they dare
Obey my frenzy's jealous raving?

My wrath but doomed my own despair;
The sword that smote her 's o'er me waving,—
But thou art cold, my murdered love!
And this dark heart is vainly craving
For her who soars alone above,
And leaves my soul unworthy saving.

She's gone who shared my diadem,
She sank, with her my joys entombing;
I swept that flower from Judah's stem
Whose leaves for me alone were blooming;
And mine's the guilt and mine's the hell
This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earned those tortures well,
Which unconsumed are still consuming.

The turbulent discontent which was partially concealed by the outward brilliance and prosperity of Herod's reign, was prevented from bursting into open rebellion only by the stringent rule of the old king. A large army of mercenaries and strong garrisons scattered throughout Palestine, kept the dissatisfied populace in subjection; and when in the latter period of his reign, more severe action became necessary, a ban was placed upon assemblies; even loitering upon the street was forbidden, and the spies of the hated Idumean went constantly to and fro among the people, he himself sometimes masquerading among them in the dress of a common citizen.

Yet many of his measures contributed to the safety and welfare of his subjects. Galilee, for-

merly the hiding-place of brigands, was colonized; travel and commerce was protected, and the buildings erected by him were many of them useful as well as beautiful. He even made spasmodic attempts to win the good will of his subjects, twice remitting a large fraction of the heavy taxes by which they were oppressed, and in time of famine selling the plate from his own table that he might relieve their distress.

In Pharisaism, with which he had no real sympathy, he recognized a power which could not be crushed, and consequently rendered an insincere homage to the religious scruples of the sect. None of the statues repugnant to the Jews were placed upon any of the public buildings erected by him in Jerusalem; he made no attempt to enter the inner court of the temple forbidden to Gentiles; and the Pharisees, who boldly refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Roman emperor and himself, were excused from punishment. But the milder features of his reign did not counteract the despotism with which he divested the Sanhedrin of all real power and appointed and removed high priests at will; or his preference for pagan surroundings and the men of Greek culture, upon whom he conferred the public offices of his kingdom, openly boasting that he was more nearly related to the Greeks than to the Jews.

Herod worshipped no God save his own ambition, and the power of Rome. To the latter, he yielded implicit obedience. Even when he was compelled by Antony to bestow the fair and fertile region about Jericho with its balsams and palm trees upon Cleopatra, he paid taxes upon his own land without complaint; and when the Egyptian queen came to inspect his gift, she was cordially received and royally entertained. His friendship and admiration for the Romans was quite sincere, and his relations with Augustus and Agrippa were so intimate that his flatterers affirmed that "Herod was dearest to Augustus next to Agrippa and to Agrippa next to Augustus."

He adopted the Greek customs and forms of culture affected by his Roman friends, and votive offerings to the Roman emperors transformed the face of Palestine. Roman baths, fountains, gymnasiums, and amphitheatres were built in Jerusalem and many other cities of Judea; the games distasteful to the Jews were celebrated every fourth year in honor of the Roman emperor; Samaria was rebuilt and named Sebaste "the August" in honor of Augustus, Herod's patron; and like Augustus, the "King of the Jews" "found brick and left marble" in his capital. In B. C. 24, he erected in Jerusalem a beautiful palace of marble and gold for himself. Three

massive towers whose bases, built from huge blocks of smooth stone, rendered them almost invincible, rose from its walls; of these, one was named for his friend Hippius, one for his favorite brother Phasael, and one, the most costly and richly ornamented of the three, for his best-loved wife, Mariamne.

A yet more ambitious undertaking was the founding of the seaport Cæsarea at the base of the ancient Straton's tower. Its harbor was protected by a powerful breakwater, and a great temple to Augustus, which could be seen far out upon the Mediterranean, overlooked the smaller houses of shining marble by which it was surrounded. Twelve years were occupied in building this city, which at a later date quite outshone Jerusalem and was made the capitol of Judea.

The members of Herod's own family were also honored with costly and lasting memorials. Where Capharsaba had stood, rose the city of Antipatris in honor of his father; at Jericho, a newly erected citadel bore the name of his mother Cypros; and north of Jericho, a city named Phasaelis for his best-loved brother, sprang into existence. On the spot where his desperate conflict with the Jews had occurred when he fled from Parthian invaders, he built a fortress named Herodium, which contained beautiful apartments for his own use, and another fortress in the

mountainous region toward Arabia also bore his name. The strongholds of Judea were fortified afresh, and in the non-Jewish cities of Palestine and nearer Spain, he erected heathen temples which he dedicated to the Roman emperors. But the results of Herod's passion for building extended far beyond the boundaries of Palestine, even to Athens and Lacedæmonia, for in many of the cities through which he travelled, he left baths, colonnades, fountains, and public buildings, as proofs of his interest and generosity.

Partly to gratify his own ambition, and partly to conciliate the people he governed, Herod began in B. C. 20 the greatest and most magnificent of all his public works, the construction of a temple so beautiful that "he who has not seen Herod's building has never seen anything beautiful" was a common saying among the Jews. When his plan was first made known to his subjects, his unsavory reputation and the sacred character of the edifice with which he wished to tamper presented objections which were not easily overcome. The oral tradition prescribed that an old synagogue must not be destroyed until a new one had been built to take its place, and the scribes declared that the same rule must be observed in regard to the temple. This hindrance was obliterated by the wily suggestion of an old Rabbi whose counsel Herod sought. He saw a

breach in the building which made its repair necessary, and the entire process of reconstruction was carried on under the pretext of needed repairs. Not once was the worship of the people interrupted, and the religious scruples of the Pharisees were respected by Herod in every way. Among the ten thousand laborers employed in the work were a thousand priests who had been trained as masons and carpenters that the more sacred parts of the edifice might not be touched by profane hands; and the enormous stones of which the building was to be composed were dragged to the top of the mountain by a thousand wagons. The temple itself was finished in eighteen months, but the forecourts were not entirely completed until thirty years after the crucifixion.

The difficulty of placing an enclosure which was to accomodate 210,000 people upon the somewhat narrow summit of the Temple Mount was very great, although its area had already been much enlarged by the Asmonean kings. Sub-structures of solid masonry supported the still more extensive courts of the new temple, and a terraced plateau, rectangular in shape, crowned the Temple Mount. The temple proper stood in the north-western and highest portion of the plateau, whose sides measuring 927 feet were outlined by massive castellated walls which rose

almost perpendicular with the steeply sloping sides of the mountain to a height of one hundred or one hundred and fifty feet. Within these surrounding walls were piazzas or covered promenades, the most ornate and beautiful of all the temple structures. They were paved with mosaics and their roofs of richly carved woods were supported by rows of graceful pillars. The most beautiful of these promenades was the southern; the most ancient, Solomon's porch on the east. From the covered colonnades one might pass into the Court of the Gentiles, where stood the space rented by the priests to the money-changers, the cattle-dealers, and the sellers of pigeons, twice driven from the temple by our Lord. On the inner boundary of the Court of the Gentiles rose the low wall beyond which no foreigner might pass. It was placarded with warning inscriptions, one of which, discovered in 1871, reads as follows:

No stranger is to enter within the balustrade round the Temple and enclosure. Whoever is caught, will be responsible to himself for his death, which will ensue.

Above the Court of the Gentiles rose three terraces, the lowest of which was occupied by the Court of the Women, the second by the Court of the Men and the Court of the Priests, and the third and highest by the temple proper. The Court of the Women contained besides the two

galleries set apart for women, thirteen alms-boxes, shaped like inverted trumpets, also receptacles for wood, oil, wine, salt and other articles used by the priests when preparing the sacrifices. On festal occasions, it was lighted by the two great chandeliers which commemorated the pillar of fire by which the children of Israel were led through the wilderness and beneath which Christ stood when he said, "I am the light of the world." The Court of the Men was separated from the Court of the Priests by a low rail over which the people might see the laver, the great brazen altar upon which the sacrifices were offered, and the door which opened into the "Chamber of Squares," the assembly-room of the Sanhedrin. These courts were entered through huge gates, profusely ornamented with plates of gold and silver, of which the eastern, or "Gate Beautiful" sometimes called Nicanor's gate, was most generally used. It was covered with Corinthian brass and so massive that to close and bar it, twenty men must be employed each evening.

The temple proper was built from a white limestone which resembled marble. It was adorned with shining plates of gold, and its roof bristled with rows of golden spikes. Its porch was beautified by the golden vine, emblematic of Palestine, to which each pilgrim added a grape or cluster of gold. Within was the Holy Place

and the mysterious Holy of Holies, separated from each other by a curtain of Babylonian tapestry; the former containing the table of shewbread, and the golden candlestick with seven branches; the latter entirely empty except for the stone on which the high priest laid his censer.

The pride of the Jews in the magnificent structure is reflected in the following eulogy by Josephus:

"Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes; for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow, for, as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white."

Forty days before the death of Herod, if the date assigned by modern critics to the birth of our Saviour is correct,* the uneasy mind of the

* The date of Christ's birth is uncertain. Hastings reckoning from Herod's death in 4 B. C., which according to Matthew, took place not long after Christ's birth, and from John II, 20, probably uttered in the second year of Christ's ministry when he was thirty-one years of age, fixes upon 5 B. C. as a probable date. The Brittanica puts the date still earlier in 7-6 B. C. Varying dates anywhere from 7-2 B. C. are suggested by other authorities.

old king was troubled by vague rumors of a portentous star in the east, and of wise men and shepherds worshipping at the shrine of a wonderful child-king; and lest the new-comer become the possessor of the splendor upon which he had lavished untiring energy, he issued a decree that all the babes in his kingdom under two years of age be put to death. It was indeed true that the Palestine beautified by Herod was to be the home of a King far greater than any other who ever reigned upon this earth, and that the greatest work of the Idumean king was to be immortalized by the words and deeds of One who was soon to tread its courts. In the kingdom of Herod, not long after his death, was to be enacted a scene of unutterable pathos, the coming of the long-awaited Saviour to a people upon a road so clouded with the dust of their own near-sighted sophistry and self-satisfaction and so noisy with the blatant rumbling of their own carnal ideals that they could not see His beauty nor hear the voice of Jehovah in the words He uttered. Yet there were a few simple and sincere souls, a Nathanael, a Mary, a Lazarus, who beheld Him with clear eyes, and believed that "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."

PART IV
DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ERA

CHAPTER IX

THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND THE TALMUD

When the children of Israel emerge from the dimly lighted centuries of Apocryphal history into the clear day of the New Testament, we behold a race whose soul has been molded and scarred by the perils and vicissitudes of the way. Grim encounters with famine, war, and persecution have left their impress upon Jewish character, as have also the subtle temptations of material prosperity and of intimate contact with the Greek and Roman masters of the world, but throughout all the changing fortunes of the race, its vital center, the heart which has controlled the pulsations of its distinctive and peculiar life, has been the law established five hundred years before the coming of Christ. Ever since the fateful day when Ezra read the sacred scrolls before the assembled Jewish people and they made a solemn covenant to do its bidding, it had been recognized as canonical, that is, as the binding rule of daily life. To obey it faithfully meant righteousness

and the service of God; no sin could be graver or more profane than the neglect of its slightest detail. Not only its commands, but every word which it contained was believed to be the result of divine inspiration. "He who asserts that the Torah is not from heaven has no part in the future world," and "He who says that Moses wrote even one word of his own knowledge is a denier and despiser of the word of God" were revered decisions of the Jewish rabbis. "The whole Pentateuch was regarded as dictated by God, as prompted by the Spirit of God. Even the last eight verses of Deuteronomy in which the death of Moses is related, were said to have been written by Moses himself by means of divine dictation. Nay, at last, the view of a divine dictation was no longer sufficient. The complete book of the law was declared to have been handed to Moses by God and it was only disputed whether God delivered the whole Torah to Moses at once or by volumes."

The law which was read by Ezra to the children of Israel consisted only of the first five books of our Old Testament; the sacred writings of the subjects of Herod the Great were divided into three groups.

The Law (or Torah)

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The Prophets (or Nabii)

Early Prophets

Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.

Later Prophets

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. The Twelve
Minor Prophets, Hosea to Malachi.

The Writings (Hagiographa or Kethubim)

(a) The poetical books

Psalms, Proverbs, Job

(b) The Migilloth or Rolls

Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations,
Ecclesiastes, Esther.

(c) Historical books

Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 'Chronicles.

Of these, the Torah was regarded with greatest reverence. Its antiquity and the tradition of its divine origin may have given it a higher place in the esteem of the Jews than books which would seem to us to have a greater spiritual value, as the Psalms or the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah; or with its double thread of narrative and law, inspiring history and definite rules for daily conduct, it may have been better adapted to meet the primitive spiritual needs of the Jewish nation.

In 432 B. C., the Pentateuch was the only part of our Bible recognized as sacred and the books of the prophets were preserved only on account of their literary merit; but, at a later date, when

the people, who so violently hated and opposed the prophets of their own generation, had passed away and the truth and value of their writings had been tested and proved throughout the troubled days of the exile and the equally trying days of the return, there was a growing conviction that these men had been the servants and mouthpiece of God. The priests began to read the prophetic writings in the synagogue, and by 200 B. C., they had been admitted to the Canon.

It is impossible to say why the Writings were so long excluded from the Canon or just when their admittance took place. The dates assigned by authorities to their origin sheds no light upon the subject for although, in the opinion of many scholars, some of the books of this group, as Daniel and Ecclesiastes, were not written until the second century B. C., others antedate the books of the later prophets. It is probably true of some of the writings that they were not collected and edited till long after their foundation had been laid. The Psalter, for instance, could not have assumed its present form earlier than sometime in the first century B. C., more than nine hundred years after the first Psalms were written by David, if, as the context would lead us to suppose, the latest Psalms were the product of the Maccabean period. The slow formation of the Psalter and the fact that it was

the hymnal of the temple service may account for its long exclusion; and the probation of other books of this group, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, was probably lengthened by the character of their contents, for their divine inspiration is still sometimes questioned by sincere Christians and they have made a less certain appeal to the spiritual perception of men of all generations than other books of the Old Testament. By the first century of the Christian era, however, all the Writings except Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon had crept into the exclusive circle of Jewish scripture; and after the admission of these two laggards, which did not occur before the second century A. D., the Hebrew makers of the Canon, less generous but more discriminating than their Alexandrian brethern, permanently closed its doors to all newcomers, and the Old Testament assumed the form which it bears today.

When the Jews first tried to regulate their daily conduct by the laws of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, they experienced even greater difficulty than would a citizen of the United States should he attempt to govern the details of his daily life by the rules of our American statute books. Many of the Jews could not read the law and those who could, did not understand how to apply it to the exigencies of daily life. No law could

have been complete enough to touch upon all the trivial points it was supposed to govern and many cases occurred to which it was impossible or inconvenient to apply its precepts in their original form. It needed interpretation and elaboration.

At first the explanation of the law was the task of the priests, but as it became more and more the center about which Jewish life revolved, learned Hebrews became professional scribes or lawyers and devoted their lives to the study of its maxims. Schools were established at Jerusalem and in other Jewish settlements where the law was the subject of endless and wearisome discussion. Each mandate was divided and subdivided again and again to meet the most trivial happenings of daily life, and innumerable absurd and petty rules were the result.

The decisions of the scribes, like the decisions of our own Supreme Courts, formed a law of precedent or custom, and were called Halacha. There was a tradition that Moses, after presenting each of the twelve tribes of Israel with a copy of the Pentateuch, had repeated an oral law four times to the assembled people. This tradition divided the Halacha into two classes, the oral precepts handed down from Moses, which were regarded with greatest reverence and the oral laws springing from the discussions of the scribes which became established only when a

majority of the learned had agreed upon their acknowledgment. All the Halacha, no matter how entirely they differed from the original mandates, were believed to spring from the laws of the Torah, and thirteen rules laid down by the Rabbis for demonstrating the law were regarded with such reverence that orthodox Hebrews repeated them daily as a part of their morning devotions.

As religion was the one absorbing interest of the Jews, the scribes occupied themselves more with the discussion of the laws which controlled their worship of God than with civil and criminal laws, the observance of the Sabbath and the rules of cleanness and uncleanness forming beyond all others, fruitful subjects for boundless discussion.

The superstitious and trifling character of these debates is illumined by the dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees in regard to touching the holy books. It was ordained by the scribes that anyone who had touched the holy books should not eat the truma or first-fruits until he had first washed his hands. They made this rule because the sacred scrolls laid carefully away in times of persecution, might have been gnawed by rats and thus rendered unclean. Therefore if a Jew had touched any one of the sacred books except Ecclesiastes, which was deemed less holy than the rest, he might not partake of the first-fruits until

his hands were washed. As a result of this momentous decision, which was ridiculed by the Sadducees, the terms "defile the hands" and "canonical" became synonymous in Rabbinical schools.

But the Rabbis did not confine their research to the law. The narrative with which it was interwoven must also be placed beneath the magnifying glass of Jewish prejudice. To render the mercies of God to his chosen people more marvellous and to cast a glamour over the heroes of their race, they gave their imagination free rein and did not hesitate to grossly exaggerate historic facts or to create wild legends and fictitious events. Genesis and Exodus were rewritten and elaborated, and we are told that Abraham instructed the King of Egypt in astrology, that the Egyptians owed their civilization to the teachings of Moses and that alphabetical writing was invented by him. The Israelites when passing through the wilderness were not furnished with water from a rock once, but a miraculous spring bubbling from a great stone accompanied them throughout their entire journey.

The more action was restricted by the rigid rules of the Halacha, the greater freedom was afforded Jewish fancy by the myths of the Haggadah. Angelology and demonology became prevalent; Bible scenes, personages, and even God himself were degraded by the coarse and profane

creations of the scribes, the Almighty and His angels being formed by them into a kind of heavenly Sanhedrin which occasionally required the aid of an earthly Rabbi.

The legends and exaggerations of the scribes were called Haggadah and with the Halacha, formed the basis of the Talmud.

For a century, the oral tradition was transmitted from one generation to another entirely by word of mouth as it was feared that its unity of development might suffer should each teacher commit his own version to writing. The Rabbis repeated it over and over to their pupils and they in turn memorized it by numerous repetitions. When, however, the Jews were scattered and threatened with extinction after the fall of Jerusalem, the principles which were most frequently subjects of discussion were collected and codified by Rabbi Jehudah, who feared they might be irretrievably lost unless they were committed to writing. This code was completed toward the end of the second century after Christ and was called the Mishna. Its contents were Halachic. It was divided into six orders or classes which were again divided into sixty tracts or treatises. The treatises were divided into chapters and the chapters into paragraphs called mishnas, that is, mixtures or miscellanies. The first class contained laws relating to seeds and products of

the fields; the second, laws relating to festival celebrations; the third, laws relating to women; the fourth, civil and criminals laws, as deposits, usuries, rents, arrests, sales and purchases; the fifth, laws governing sacrifices and vows; the sixth, laws of cleanness and uncleanness.

Throughout the third and fourth centuries A. D. the principles embodied in the Mishna were discussed in the schools of Palestine with unwearied energy and the Gemara or opinions of the scribes were also committed to writing. The Gemara, meaning complement or perfection, was united with the Mishna and the result was the Jerusalem Talmud.

The Mishna was carried to Babylon by a pupil of Rabbi Jehudah and there became the foundation of the Babylonian Talmud, a book more highly valued and four times as bulky as its Palestinian predecessor. The extreme length and wearisome detail of both volumes may be conjectured from the fact that the discussion of the fifth and sixth Sedars were never reached in either, the Palestinian Talmud containing the elaboration of thirty-nine tracts and the Babylonian of thirty-six and one-half.

The Talmud received even greater respect and reverence from the Jews than the Torah. They compared the Pentateuch to water and the Talmud to wine. Of the twelve hours of which the

day was composed, they declared that God employed nine to study the Talmud and only three to read the written law; and the reading of the Hagiographa in the synagogue was forbidden lest it divert the attention of the people from the discourses of the Rabbis. But to non-Jewish and modern scholars, this repository of Jewish wisdom presents the aspect of a vast ocean in whose muddy depths there are few pearls, a dreary desert with only an occasional oasis. It is pre-eminently a statute book; but besides laws and explanations of laws hopelessly entangled with Jewish ideas of morality and religion, it contains treatises on education, ethics, mathematics, medicine, botany, zoology, astronomy, and geography with biographical sketches of the Jewish scholars who wrote them; and beneath its distorted mask of prejudice and superstition rest genuine features of Jewish history.

A few beautiful and noble sayings in which the Rabbis found a pretext for diminishing the originality of Jesus may be gleaned from its innumerable pages. Among them are the following:

Love peace and pursue it at any cost.

Remember that it is better to be persecuted than to persecute.

He who giveth alms in secret is greater than Moses himself.

It is better to utter a short prayer with devotion than a long one without fervor.

The following is an extract from Canon Farrar's criticism of the Talmud:

"The language of the Talmud is uncouth, corrupt and often unintelligible, and nothing can be conceived more unprofitable and tedious than its confused and desultory wrangles teeming with contradictions and mistakes. Lightfoot, than whom no scholar has a better right to speak, says that the 'almost unconquerable difficulty of the style, the frightful roughness of the language, and the amazing emptiness and sophistry of the matters handled do torture, vex, and tire him who reads.' "

CHAPTER X

SCHOOL AND SYNAGOGUE

After the exile, the Jews, except for a comparatively short period of independence, were the subjects of foreign powers who cared nothing for their religious laws and customs. Even their native Asmonean monarchs were, with one or two exceptions, Sadducees who ridiculed the oral tradition and made the rules of the Torah subservient to political advancement. If therefore the law was to be enforced and practiced, it must be propped into its high and central position by public sentiment and careful education. The former was created by the scribes whose influence over the people was almost unlimited.

“Let your house be a house of assembly for those wise in the law; let yourself be dusted by the dust of their feet, and drink eagerly their teaching”;

“He who in walking repeats the law to himself, but interrupts himself, and exclaims ‘How beautiful is this tree! How beautiful is this field!’ the Scripture will impute it to him as though he had forfeited his life”;

"A bastard who knows the law takes precedence of the high priest if he is ignorant"; are samples of the sayings with which they kindled the enthusiasm of their followers.

According to the oral tradition, it was Moses who first prescribed that boys should learn the most important laws and commanded the people to instruct their children in reading and writing that they might know the deeds of their forefathers and walk according to the holy laws. This, like many other bits of Haggadic wisdom, is only a flight of Rabbinical fancy, although it is impossible to read the book of Proverbs without being led to believe that the Jews set a high value upon education at a very early date. It was not, however, until Ezra and Nehemiah had made the law the prime factor in the religion of Israel, that, in the words of Wellhausen, piety and education became inseparable, the community became a school, and the Bible a spelling-book.

At first the instruction of the children was the task of the father and mother and home teaching made a knowledge of reading more widely distributed than might be supposed. Even in the Maccabean period, copies of the law are mentioned as the property of private individuals, (I Macc. i, 56,) a fact which would presuppose an ability to read on the part of their owners. The culture of Alexandria doubtless had a

stimulating effect upon Jewish learning, for according to Josephus, the tax-farmer Joseph sent his sons there to be educated during the reign of the Ptolemies; and a new impulse to education was probably received from Hellenism and from such sages as Jesus, the Son of Sirach.*

To make instruction in the law more thorough and more general, elementary schools for boys were finally established in every town and province of Palestine. The date when these schools first sprang into existence is wrapped in obscurity. It is thought by some critics that a school for boys may have entered Jerusalem with the first gymnasium in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes; and the tradition which tells us that Simon ben Shetach made attendance upon the elementary schools compulsory would assume the existence of at least scattered elementary schools in his day, if the halo with which the Pharisees surround the golden age of Alexandra did not render the many legends which gather about her reign of a doubtful character. Later traditions which cannot be ignored make the existence of public schools, in the first century of the Christian era, a certainty and indicate that they undoubtedly became a regular and established institution a century later. Legal decisions in

* Jos. Ant. XII, iv, 6, implies that schools on the Greek Model had been established in Jerusalem before B. C. 220.

regard to teachers are found in the Mishna, and Jewish annals record the decree made by Joshua ben Gamla (Jesus the son of Gamaliel) who was high priest about 63-65 A. D., that teachers of boys be appointed in every town and province and that children at the age of six or seven, be compelled to attend their classes.

Josephus who lived in the first century of the Christian era, boasts of being so well acquainted with the rules of Torah in his fourteenth year that the high priest and elders of Jerusalem came to him for information. He also speaks in glowing terms of the enthusiasm shown in the instruction of young children. "We take most pains of all," he says, "with the instruction of children, and esteem the observation of the laws and the piety corresponding with them the most important affair of our whole lives. If anyone should question one of us concerning the laws, he would more easily repeat them all than his own name. Since we learn them from our first consciousness, we have them, as it were, engraven on our souls; and a transgression is rare, but the averting of punishment impossible."

A room in the synagogue was reserved for a school-room and the minister or Hazan was also the instructor of the children. Boys entered school when they were six years of age. They were instructed in reading, writing, and the

simplest elements of arithmetic. Their first text book was a roll of scripture and their first lesson a verse from Leviticus. After the letters were mastered, the child learned the verse by heart, repeating it over and over again. Constant repetition played an important part in Jewish education, and the school-room was constantly filled with a confused babel of voices, for "was there not once a pupil who learned his task without repeating the words aloud and in consequence forgot all he had learned in three years?" After the verse was perfectly memorized, the teacher copied it and taught the pupil to recognize the words it contained.

The children were taught to write upon a sherd of pottery and were later promoted to wax tablets upon which they formed letters with a pointed style or metal instrument. It was not until they had become proficient that they were allowed to try their skill on the costly papyrus from which the scrolls were made. Only a few boys who wished to become sages or scribes continued their education after completing the course furnished by the elementary schools, and as there were no schools for girls, they were taught by their mothers at home.

From their earliest years, the young Jews must practice the law as well as learn its theory. They were instructed in the observance of the

Sabbath at a tender age, and were gradually accustomed to the prescribed fasts. As soon as boys were able to walk, their fathers were urged to lead or carry them to the feasts at the temple, especially to the Feast of Tabernacles. When a grandson was born to Shammai, the famous Pharisee, on the Day of Atonement, he left the roof of his daughter-in-law's chamber open and covered the bed with branches in his zeal to observe the precept given in the Mishna, "A boy who is capable of shaking the lubab is bound to keep it," that is, the Feast of Tabernacles.

The minority of a Jewish boy had passed when he reached the age of twelve or thirteen years; the duties and privileges of every grown Israelite were his; and the school was superseded by the synagogue.

The synagogue was the herald which proclaimed the message of Judaism not only throughout Palestine, but in every remote town or city of the dispersion. A demand for houses of worship where the law might be read and studied was created by Ezra and Nehemiah, and although the Rabbis invested the synagogue with dignity by ascribing its origin to the command of Moses, there is no evidence of its existence until after the return. The eighth verse of Psalm seventy-four, which was probably written in the Maccabean period, contains the first reference to the

synagogue found in the Bible, and with papyrus finds of recent years indicates that their existence had become quite general by the latter half of the second century before Christ, although their origin may be ascribed to an earlier date.* As early as the third century before Christ wherever there was a settlement of Jews, they formed themselves into a congregation, and a synagogue was built generally by the free contributions of the people, sometimes by the generosity of one wealthy man. One synagogue was found in every small Jewish town and many more in Jewish cities, although the tradition that there were four hundred and eighty in Jerusalem is doubtless an exaggeration.

To render these emissaries of Judaism more conspicuous, the Rabbis commanded that they be built upon the highest point of land in the town and that a tall pole rise from their roofs. This command must often have been disregarded, for the ruins of old synagogues found in Galilee are situated in the lower parts of the town; and their entrances which, according to the Rabbinical requirements, should have been on the west, are situated at the south so that each Jew as he entered, would be obliged to turn his back toward

* Not a few references to the synagogues of the Jewish communities in Egypt from the time of Ptolemy Euergetes (247-221 B.C.) onwards have been discovered on ancient manuscripts in recent years.

the holy city. Sometimes locations on the banks of streams or lakes were chosen that the worshippers might have a convenient place in which to perform the ablutions necessary before entering; and sometimes reverence for a holy man who had passed away, was expressed by the erection of a house of prayer near his tomb.

The form and size of the synagogue differed with the size and wealth of its congregation. Ruins still extant prove that they were almost always rectangular in shape with the largest dimension running north and south. The walls were formed from blocks of native limestone "chiselled" into each other without mortar, the floors were paved with the same white stone, and the roofs were thickly covered with earth to keep out the intense heat. The interior was divided into aisles by rows of columns, and the entrances were three in number, one large door opening into the central aisle and a smaller one on each side. The space over the doors was ornamented with appropriate figures in sculpture, the golden candlestick, the pot of manna, the paschal lamb or the vine. Synagogues were sometimes distinguished from each other by special emblems. In Sepphoris there was the synagogue of the vine and in Rome the synagogue of the olive tree.

The interior of the synagogue was so arranged as to recall the interior of the temple at Jeru-

salem. A sunken place used for a porch corresponded to the forecourts of the temple, and an elevated place near the center of the room where the reading desk stood, in some measure, to the altar. The recess in which the sacred scrolls were kept was typical of the Holy of Holies, and the curtain which enclosed it, of the veil which separated that mysterious chamber from the Holy place. The scrolls were carefully wrapped in several covers of silk and linen, which were sometimes embroidered and ornamented with little bells, or, if the means of the worshippers permitted it, adorned with silver and gold. In front of this closet, hung an ever-burning lamp symbolic of the eternal fire of the altar and beside it, an eight branched candlestick shaped like the golden candlestick of the Holy place.

The elders of the synagogue sat on raised cushions in the chief seats next the recess and the people stood or sat on the floor facing them. Men and women were separated by a lattice and sat with their backs to each other. In wealthier congregations, a gallery was built for the women, but they were always placed where they could not be seen by the men of the congregation. Men of the same trade sat together and if there was a leper among the worshippers, a space was set apart for him. The trombone and trumpets with which the Hazan, standing on the

roof of the synagogue, announced the advent of Sabbaths and feast days, were kept at his own house.

Synagogues were set apart by a prayer of dedication and were regarded with great reverence by the people. If deserted, they must not be used for baths, tanneries, or laundries. The passerby must not take refuge from the sun or wind in a synagogue or go through it to shorten his way.

The chief authorities of these houses of prayer were a council of elders who, in strictly Jewish localities, were also the political authorities of the place. They enforced the law by pronouncing a sentence of excommunication upon offenders, a ban which excluded the culprits either permanently or temporarily from the congregation, and was accompanied in extreme cases by the dreaded anathema or publicly pronounced curse. They also looked out for the poor and strangers, and had a general oversight of the affairs of the synagogue.

Besides the elders, various officers were appointed to discharge especial duties. A ruler of the synagogue, often one of its elders, was chosen to supervise its services, that is, to decide who should read from the Scripture, preach the sermon, conduct the prayers, and pronounce the benediction. It was also his duty to care for the building itself and see that nothing improper

took place within its precincts. Five receivers of alms, two to receive and three to distribute offerings, collected money in a box and natural products in a dish and gave them to the poor.

The Hazan or minister must be well-versed in the scripture and of irreproachable character. He acted as the sexton of the synagogue, bringing out the scrolls and putting them away, cleaning the lamps and opening and closing the doors. In addition to his other duties, he executed sentences of scourging, often taught the children to read, and generally lead the chanting or prayer. To guard against empty seats and a congregation of less than the required number, the resourceful authorities of post-Talmudic times employed ten men who were bound by a fee to attend each service of the week from beginning to end.

In every Jewish home, the Sabbath lamp was lighted, the best garments put on, and the house made ready for the coming of the holy day on Friday night. On Saturday morning, the family hastened to the synagogue, going quickly and returning slowly in accordance with the rules of the Rabbis. Services were held on the morning and evening of the Sabbath and upon Mondays and Thursdays, the market days of the Jews. The principal features of the Sabbath morning service were the recitation of the Shema, the prayer, reading from the Thorah, reading from the pro-

phets, and the benediction. At least seven members of the congregation were appointed by the ruler of the synagogue to take part in the service each Sabbath. During the prayer and the recitation of the Shema, which was the Jewish confession of faith and consisted of certain passages from Deuteronomy and Number,* the people stood with their faces turned toward the Holy of Holies and the leader stood in front of the recess where the rolls of scripture were kept, the congregation making only certain responses during the prayer. This portion of the service was followed by readings of not less than three verses each from the Torah, which in the Mishna was divided into one hundred and fifty-four sections, so that, by reading one section each Sabbath, the whole might be finished in three years. After the reading from the Pentateuch, one person who might select any passage he chose, read from the prophets, and as the people no longer understood the Hebrew in which the sacred books were written, a translator was employed who translated each verse as soon as it was read, into the Aramaic dialect. Some member of the congregation, preferably a priest or Levite, next gave an edifying discourse upon the portion which had been read. One of these sermons preserved in the Talmud was upon the text

* Deut. VI, 4-9; XI, 13-21 and Num. XV, 37-41.

"He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation," and may illustrate their characteristics.

"There are seven garments which the Holy One, blessed be His name, has put on since the world began or will put on before the hour when He will visit with His wrath the godless Edom. When He created the world, He clothed Himself in honor and glory for it says: 'Thou art clothed with honor and glory.' When He showed Himself at the Red Sea, He clothed Himself in majesty, for it says: 'The Lord reigneth, He is clothed in majesty.' When He gave the law, He clothed Himself with might, for it says: 'Jehovah is clothed with might wherewith He hath girded Himself.' As often as He forgave Israel its sins, He clothed Himself in white for it says: 'His garment was white as snow.' When He punishes the nations of the world He puts on the garments of vengeance for it says: 'He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak.' He will put on the sixth robe when the Messiah is revealed. Then will He clothe Himself in righteousness for it says: 'For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate and an helmet of salvation on His head.' He will put on the seventh robe when He punishes Edom. Then will He clothe Himself in Adom (red) for it says: Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel?' But the robes in which He will

clothe the Messiah will shine from one end of the world to the other, for it says: 'As a bridegroom who is crowned with his turban, like a priest.' And the sons of Israel will rejoice in His light and will say, 'Blessed be the hour when the Messiah was born, blessed the womb which bore Him, blessed the eyes which were counted worthy to see Him. For the opening of His lips is blessing and peace, His speech is rest to the soul, the thoughts of His heart confidence and joy, the speech of His lips pardon and forgiveness, His prayer like the sweet-smelling savor of a sacrifice, His supplications holiness and purity.' O how blessed is Israel, for whom such a lot is reserved, for it says: 'How great is Thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.' "

If a priest were present, he closed the service by pronouncing a benediction to which the people responded; but a prayer was substituted for the benediction if there was no priest among the worshippers.

This was the order of service prescribed by the Mishna and conscientiously followed in the synagogues of Palestine, but in Alexandria and other cities of the dispersion, the lesson for the Torah was read by one person. A similar but shorter order of service was used on the evening of the Sabbath and at week-day meetings, when

only three members of the congregation were called upon to take part in the service and the Pentateuch alone was read. Every Jewish festival was observed by public worship at the synagogue, and certain passages of scripture prescribed by the Mishna for special feast days were read.

Besides attending the services of the synagogue, the men of the congregation must repeat the Shema twice daily; and the Shemoneh Esreh or nineteen benedictions, a prayer which was inaugurated by the great assembly of Ezra, but did not assume the form in which it appeared in Jewish prayer books until the first century after Christ, must be repeated by every Israelite including women, slaves and children, morning, afternoon and evening. The rules of the Mishna also obliged every Jew to give thanks before and after eating and to say certain prayers, upon new moons, new years and feast days.

CHAPTER XI

THE ABSURDITIES OF LEGALISM

When the requirements of the Torah had been multiplied and remultiplied by the many explanations and elaborations of the oral tradition and the Jews had been trained from infancy to the mercenary belief that every observance or transgression of its precepts met with a fitting retribution of reward or punishment, both in this world and the final settlement in the world to come, piety, so called, necessarily became an article made to the order of the Rabbis, the artificial product of that great machine, the law. Natural tendrils of spontaneous goodness were nipped, blossoms of heart and conscience dissected by its endless gyrations. A man's worship of God, his relation toward his heathen neighbors, in fact, nearly every detail of Jewish daily life was rendered automatic by its compulsory passage between the iron teeth of the great machine.

Every day the conscientious Jew must wend his way through a labyrinthine maze of rules and

restrictions, but on the Sabbath, ingenuity and learning must be many times redoubled to avoid committing deadly sin. Twenty-four chapters of the Talmud are devoted to the discussion and elaboration of the simple directions for Sabbath observance given in the Bible and matters are there discussed as of "vital religious importance which one could scarcely imagine a sane intellect would seriously entertain."

Bearing a burden upon the Sabbath had been forbidden in the Pentateuch (Ex. xxxvi. 6) and an endless series of explanations and rules was evolved from the original command. The bearing of a burden was divided into two separate acts, picking it up and putting it down. It might thus be transferred from a public to a private place. A public place and a private place must therefore be defined and the exact weight and bulk of a burden must also be determined. The decision that anything of the weight of a dried fig constituted a burden and could not be carried from one place to another without desecrating the Sabbath only led to the propounding of another question. If half a fig was carried at two different times would the combined acts make the perpetrator guilty? By the decree of the Rabbis, anything of which practical use could be made, even if it weighed less than the prescribed half-fig, as two horsehairs from which a bird

trap might be constructed, a piece of paper large enough for a custom-house notice, enough ink to write two letters, or enough wax to fill a small hole, was a burden and must not be carried from one place to another upon the Sabbath day.

The command "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work" was much too general to be satisfactory. To determine exactly what work was prohibited taxed the time and learning of noted scribes and, as a result of their labor, forty less one kinds of work are enumerated in the Talmud as especially blameworthy. Among them are reaping, ploughing, threshing, grinding, baking, tying a knot, untying a knot, sewing two stitches, writing two letters, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, and carrying from one tenement to another. But these restrictions were again much too indefinite to meet with the approval of the scribes who divided and subdivided them with untiring energy. The person who scattered two seeds on the Sabbath was accounted guilty of sowing; anyone who plucked two ears of corn or even a blade of grass had committed the sin of reaping; and he who picked up ripe fruit lying beneath a tree had twice broken the law by reaping and bearing a burden upon the consecrated day. After much argument as to the kind of knot

which might legally be tied or untied on the Sabbath, it was decided that a woman might tie the strings of her cap or girdle, the straps of her shoes and sandals, or strings which fastened skins of oil or wine; and since it was permissible to tie the strings of the girdle, a pail might be tied over a well with a girdle, but not with a rope. A knot which could be managed with one hand might be tied or untied, but tying or untying the knots of sailors or camel drivers involved labor and these might not legally be touched.

A set of rules guarding against any possible profanation of the Sabbath must be observed by every conscientious Israelite before sun-set on Friday evening. The tailor was prohibited from going out at twilight with his needle or the scribe with his pen, lest the holy day come upon him unawares and he transgress through forgetfulness. To guard against the sin of baking upon the Sabbath, putting bread in the oven or cakes upon the coals after twilight, was expressly forbidden. Neither was it allowable to cleanse clothing from vermin or read by lamp-light upon the evening of the Sabbath, as in either case one might be tempted to put oil in the lamp, which would be kindling a fire, or to move it in order to see better, which would be bearing a burden. Besides, an insect might be found and killed, an act

expressly forbidden, the killing of a flea being fraught with as deadly sin as the slaying of a camel.

Women were warned against wearing any new or novel ornament which, on their way to and from the synagogue, they might be tempted to take off and show to their companions for should it be carried in the hand, they would have committed the sin of bearing a burden. Neither was it advisable for a woman to look in her mirror upon the holy day, lest she discover a white hair and pull it out which would be a grievous sin; and wearing wooden shoes studded with nails or only one shoe was prohibited as involving labor. Any conscientious Jew might use a wooden leg or crutches or wear wadding in his ear upon the Sabbath, but false teeth or a gold plug in the tooth were forbidden luxuries, as either might fall out and the wearer would then be tempted to lift and carry them. Only that food which had been prepared on a week day especially for the Sabbath might be touched or tasted upon the holy day. If a hen laid an egg upon the Sabbath, it was forbidden food, for it could not have been prepared upon a week day with intention, as it was not then laid and did not exist.

In case of fire, warfare, or illness, certain concessions were made. The scriptures and the cases in which they were enclosed might be borne from

the scene of a conflagration upon the Sabbath. If a fire broke out Friday evening, enough food might be saved for three meals; if on the morning of the Sabbath, enough for two; if on Saturday afternoon, enough for one only. The precedent established by Mattathias Maccabeus when with his followers, he fought for his life upon the holy day, was followed by his descendants; and the Jews might legally defend themselves when attacked, but were not allowed to take the initiative in warfare. As the New Testament indicates, the laws in regard to healing upon the Sabbath were very stringent; only when life was endangered was the use of remedies to relieve suffering permissible. A physician was not allowed to set a broken or dislocated bone, but if anyone, Jew or Gentile, should be buried beneath a falling wall or building, the law permitted his friends to ascertain whether he were alive or dead; if alive, he might be rescued; but if he were dead, his body must be left untouched until the following day.

To guard against any possible desecration of the day, the many special laws were supplemented by the general regulations that no one could climb a tree, ride, swim, clap his hands, strike his sides, or dance without profaning the Sabbath rest.

Even more burdensome and more effective than the laws of the Sabbath as a barrier between Jew

and Gentile were the laws of cleanness and uncleanness which must be observed every day in the week. The commands of the Torah in regard to this subject, many of which would meet with the approval of modern physicians as preventing the spread of contagious disease and contributing to the public health and welfare, were distorted into ludicrous caricatures of their original selves by the ceaseless elaborations of the scribes, who constantly increased the number of ways in which an orthodox Israelite might incur defilement. A Jew was obliged to observe rites of purification after coming in contact with a Gentile, his house, or any object capable of contracting uncleanness which he had touched. Kitchen utensils bought of a Gentile must be plunged into boiling water or purged by fire before they were used; it was not allowable to eat at the table of a Gentile, and the milk, oil, and bread of the heathen were prohibited foods.

The laws of defilement governing dishes and utensils were especially diffuse and occupied thirty chapters of the Mishna. It was there decreed that the empty space in hollow earthen dishes might contract and cause uncleanness, but that the outside was incapable of contracting or imparting contamination. Unclean dishes could be cleansed only by breaking, and if after breaking, there remained a piece which would

hold oil enough to anoint the great toe, this fragment was still unclean. According to the Mishna, defilement was caught and imprisoned in hollow spaces, but slipped from flat surfaces and left them harmless. A flat plate without a rim, an open coal shovel or perforated roaster were clean under all circumstances, but the contagious germ of defilement clung to a plate with a rim, a covered coal shovel or an ink-stand with divisions.

Water used for purposes of purification was of six grades ranging from the stagnant water of a ditch or pond to the water of an active spring. Here again the scribes found ample material for elaboration and explanation and many and diverse were the opinions as to the proportions in which the different grades of water might be mixed and whether it might be mingled with snow, hail, hoar-frost, or ice, for a purifying immersion.

The rule that the hands must be washed before eating, for the neglect of which Christ was severely censured, was supplemented by another considered even more important, that of washing the hands after eating; and finally the most rigorous washed between courses. The large jars used for ablutions must be carefully guarded from the introduction of any discoloring or defiling substance and must not be used for any

other purpose. If ordinary food was to be eaten, an uplifting or affusion of the hands only was necessary, but an immersion must take place when the first fruits formed a part of the meal. For an affusion, enough water to fill one and one-half egg shells must be poured upon the uplifted hands in such a way that it would run down from the fingers to the wrists. If the water did not reach the wrists, the hands were not clean. Hence Mark vii, 3, must mean the Pharisees do not eat except when they have first washed their hands to the wrists.

Under the pressure of all these harassing and burdensome rules, Jewish religion rapidly lost its freshness and vitality; but even more devitalizing were the laws in regard to prayer, that most vital center of religious growth, for the form, time, and manner of Israelitish devotion were all restricted with a minuteness of detail which tended to degrade the natural cry of the soul to God into a meaningless matter of dull routine. The "vain repetitions" of the prescribed forms which were in themselves beautiful and inspiring, must be uttered only at the hours indicated by the Rabbis. A conscientious Jew might repeat his evening Shema only between the time when the priests returned to eat the heave offering and the end of the first night watch, although the hour was extended by a few

authorities until midnight or even until break of dawn. The time for repeating the morning Shema extended from early twilight when blue could first be distinguished from white until the sun appeared or according to one eminent authority, until nine o'clock in the morning, the hour when the children of princes were accustomed to arise. If however, during the stated hours, one should read among other passages of Scripture that containing the Shema, he might be excused from the customary repetitions if he had remembered his devotions and had consciously performed them in this way.

As the Pharisees only too often so arranged their daily tasks that the hour of prayer overtook them upon the street corners or in the market place where they could make a public display of their devout zeal, the question of making and receiving salutations during prayer arose, and the decision of the Mishna that prayer must not be interrupted even to salute a king or unwind a serpent from one's foot was modified by the scribes. Salutations were divided by them into three classes, salutations of reverence, salutations of fear, and salutations to anyone. In the opinion of certain revered Rabbis, the salutation of fear might be given only in the middle of the Shema, but the salutation of reverence at the end of any one of the paragraphs into which it was

divided. Rabbi Jehudah, however, he by whom the Mishna had been committed to writing, permitted the salutation of fear to be given in the middle of the prayer while the salutation to anyone was allowable between paragraphs.

More general rules commanded that prayer be said audibly and in the right order. The devotee who made a mistake must begin again at the place where the mistake was made and repeat all perfectly to the end. Workmen might pray in a tree or upon a wall.

Thanking God for food before and after eating was also chilled into a formalism, which too often touched neither heart nor spirit. Different forms of grace were prescribed for different kinds of food. Wine, fruits of the ground, bread, vegetables, vinegar, unripe fallen fruits, locusts, milk, cheese and eggs were each and all provided with a specified blessing. It was decreed by Rabbi Jehudah that food the size of an egg demanded the expression of gratitude to God; but that no duty might be left unperformed, devout Jews said grace over food the size of an olive. According to the school of Shammai, anyone who forgot to say grace, must return to the place where he had eaten and rectify his delinquency, but the school of Hillel, less stringent, permitted him to say it until the food

was digested whenever and wherever it came to mind.

In addition to all prescribed rules for behavior, three outward symbols attached to the person of Jewish adults or the doorpost of Jewish dwellings constantly reminded devout Israelites of their duty to God. These were the Zizith, the phylacteries or Tephillin, and the Mezuzah. The Zizith were the fringes or tassels of hyacinthine blue which the Pentateuch commanded all Jewish men to wear at the corners of their outer garments (Num. xv, 37. Deut. xxii, 12) "that they might look upon them and remember the commandments of the Lord their God." The Mezuzah was a small oblong box fastened to the right hand doorpost of rooms in Jewish houses. The passages Deut. vi, 4-9 and xi, 13-21 were written upon it in two paragraphs, and Jewish children early became accustomed to seeing the name of the Most High touched with reverence by all who came and went and the fingers kissed which had come in contact with the holy words. The Tephillin or phylacteries were the prayer-straps which must be worn by every adult male at morning devotions. They consisted of small cases containing tiny rolls of parchment on which was written Ex. xiii, 1-10, xiii, 11-16 and Deut. vi, 4-9, xi, 13-21, and

might be carried in the hand or fastened to the arm by a leather strap. Slightly larger cases divided into four compartments, one for each paragraph of scripture, were sometimes worn upon the forehead just below the hair.

Under the cultivation of the scribes, the "hedge of the law," had become a thicket which threatened to choke out the garden of true religion it had been originated to protect. Although there were still many sincere Israelites who endeavored to make legalism the vehicle of true religion rather than its substitute, far too often its devotees believed that in discharging its numerous and artificial obligations they had fulfilled their whole duty toward God and man, and were puffed up with self-satisfied pride because they had conscientiously performed the arduous undertaking. Moreover, legalism had become a burden so heavy that its disciples longed to be free from its oppressive weight; and the moral nature of the Rabbis had been so stultified by their absorption in trifling formalities that the license with which they had twisted and exaggerated the words of the sacred books was now applied to the evasion of the self-imposed precepts of the oral tradition, every word of which they professed to believe infinitely sacred.

The law which forbade carrying from one

tenement to another was exceptionally trying because it restricted all freedom of movement upon the Sabbath, but if the size of a tenement could be enlarged, the troublesome law might be rendered less vexatious. It was therefore decreed by the Rabbis that the possession of a common entrance or a common store of food made several tenements one; and before the beginning of the Sabbath, food collected from all the dwellers in a common court was deposited in one place to signify that the contributors occupied a single tenement.

Or a narrow space enclosed on three sides by a beam, rope, or string served as a common entrance and made a number of dwellings one. It was quite in keeping with the spirit of legalism that the quantity and kind of food used for the common store be decided upon with conscientious care and the length and breadth of the common entrance and the size of the beams, ropes, and strings with which it was enclosed be made the subject of careful consideration.

Walking a distance of more than two thousand cubits upon the Sabbath was also a forbidden privilege and since the restriction interfered with certain social pleasures, it was evaded with the same childish, but deceitful ingenuity. A Pharisee who wished to dine with a friend living more than two thousand cubits from his own abode,

deposited food enough for two meals at a distance of two thousand cubits from his dwelling, and from the fictitious home so created, he might walk two thousand cubits, thus doubling the allotted distance and reaching the home of his friend. Further quibbling rendered the law still more elastic, and if any Jew who walked or rode upon the Sabbath saw a tree or wall two thousand cubits distant, he might declare it his Sabbath abode; but the prevarication must be conscientiously performed and he must say, "My Sabbath place shall be at its trunk." For if he said only, "My Sabbath place shall be under it," this did not hold good, because it was too general and indefinite.

The meddling extended to points far more deep-seated and vital than those just mentioned and obligations to parents, the sanctity of marriage, and fidelity to the solemnly administered oath were all profaned by the touch of the same light hands. Deuteronomy xxiv, 1, was misinterpreted to mean that a man might put away his wife if she should spoil his food or if he found another fairer than she. Instead of contributing to the support of his aged parents, a son might say of the money which should have been used for this purpose, "It is Corban," that is, given to God, and thus elude the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

It was indeed true of the spiritual leaders of the people that they paid "tithes of anise and mint and cummin and omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; devoured widow's houses and for a pretence made long prayers in the market place, made clean the outside of the cup and the platter but within they were full of extortion and excess."

CHAPTER XII

THE SCRIBES, THE PHARISEES, THE SADDUCEES AND THE ESSENES

When the voice of prophecy had been silenced by the voice of the law, the authority of priest and prophet was supplanted by that of the lawyer or scribe, and the reverence rendered the oral tradition was extended to its custodian and inventor. In Galilee, Babylon, Judea and the cities of the dispersion, wherever the message of the sacred scrolls had been borne, the scribe performed his conspicuous and manifold duties. He made plain intricate and obscure passages of scripture; he elaborated ancient laws and created new ones till every possible emergency was provided for; he preached in the synagogue and took his place beside elders and high priests in courts of justice. "No one could be born, circumcised, brought up, educated, betrothed, married or buried—no one could celebrate the Sabbath or other feasts or begin a business, or make a contract, or kill a beast for food, or even bake bread, without the advice or presence of a Rabbi." In his

own estimation and that of his followers, he was "the well plastered pit filled with the water of knowledge out of which not one drop can escape" and the "divine aristocrat among the vulgar herd of rude and profane country people who know not the law and are accursed." He exacted from his pupils in extreme measure the reverence in which the American boys and girls of the present generation are sadly deficient. As the spiritual sponsor of his people, he believed he had performed for them a greater service than their earthly parents; consequently, if a father and a teacher bore burdens and both needed assistance, the son and pupil must first aid his teacher; or if a man's teacher and his father had both been sold into captivity, the teacher must first be ransomed and then the father. Pupils must assent to any statement that their master made, no matter how startling or incredible it might be. The vanity and self-esteem fostered by this unreasoning homage sometimes resulted in claims that were both blasphemous and degrading; and a story of a certain learned Rabbi who was said to have been called by God to heaven to confirm His opinion in a dispute which had taken place between Himself and the angels, is actually recorded in the Talmud. No wonder that in three of the gospels, the scribes are condemned by Christ for loving the uppermost

rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogue and to be called of men "Rabbi! Rabbi!"

The fact that scribes were prohibited from receiving money for teaching, preaching or pronouncing judgment and must often live lives of poverty and self-sacrifice doubtless won the confidence and respect of their followers. "Make the law neither a crown wherewith to make a show nor a spade wherewith to dig" and "He who uses the crown (of the law) for external aims fades away" were sayings which contributed to the effectiveness of their authority, and it is still a Jewish proverb that a fat Rabbi is little worth.

The rule in regard to receiving recompense for official services, although sometimes modified in the case of teachers, was generally observed; and unless a Rabbi was financially independent, he must learn a trade by means of which he might earn a livelihood for himself and his family. Hillel, the most famous of all the scribes, supported himself by the work of his hands and other Rabbis of repute earned their living by needle-making, shoe-making, and fashioning articles from metal, St. Paul, who was also a Rabbi, weaving covers for tents to earn his daily bread. As the greater proportion of a Rabbi's time must be spent in attending to professional duties, he could gain only scanty

subsistence from trade; but, in spite of his poverty, he was cordially received into wealthy Jewish families and often found an escape from hardship in marriage, for the honor of becoming either the father-in-law or son-in-law of a Rabbi more than compensated for the expense incurred in his support.

It was a scribe's first duty to make himself thoroughly conversant with both the oral and written law, a task at least partially accomplished in youth by attending one of those houses of instruction where young men eager for a knowledge of the law gathered about famous Rabbis. The mastery of the oral tradition was made especially difficult by the fact that it was not committed to writing, and the thousands of minutiae of which it consisted must be laboriously memorized by numerous repetitions on the part of both teacher and pupil. The monotony of this wearisome method was sometimes broken by a series of questions in the discussion of which the pupils were allowed to join, or by Haggadic legends of a lively character with which the Rabbis entertained their pupils. Students were especially warned against any slip of memory or repeating a precept in other than the exact words in which it was imparted to them, the great Hillel himself purposely mispronouncing a word because his teacher had committed the same error.

But the mastery of the law as it stood was only the beginning of a scribe's study, for new laws to meet real or possible contingencies must be constantly created, and Rabbinical schools of highest rank were those in which noted Rabbis met to prolong and separate into more and more infinitesimal strands the never-ending thread of the oral tradition. The results of the scribes' discussions at first had no bearing upon actual life, but as their opinions gained in repute, theory became established law and a decision upon which a majority of the learned had agreed must be recognized and obeyed. These schools centered about Jerusalem, the discussions sometimes taking place in the outer courts of the temple or beneath the colonnades of its porches.

Since a scribe's actual knowledge of the law made him a desirable judge, he was frequently appointed to sentence offenders in minor courts of justice and was among the prominent members of the great Sanhedrin. After the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 when the Sanhedrin was dissolved and the temple worship necessarily abandoned, the Rabbis as the only leaders of the people, gained such absolute authority both as legislators and judges that the decree or sentence of one scribe of distinction was voluntarily obeyed. (It is related that Rabbi Akiha once condemned a man to pay a fine of 400 denarii for un-

covering his head to a woman in the street). In addition to his other duties, the Rabbi was more frequently called to preach in the synagogue than any other member of the congregation, and the preservation of the ancient text of Scripture from interpolations also fell to his lot.

The most famous of all the scribes were Hillel and Shammai, the leaders of two rival schools existing at Jerusalem in the reign of Herod the Great. The accounts of their lives which have been handed down to us are many of them legendary. It is said that Hillel came from his birthplace Babylon to Jerusalem that he might attend the school of Shemeaiah and Abtalion. As he was a day laborer with a family dependent on him for support, he was one Friday night unable to pay the small entrance fee which the school demanded and in spite of the bitter cold and falling snow, climbed up to the window of the house of instruction to overhear the words of his famous masters. The discussion continued all night and when at the approach of daylight, a darkened window attracted the attention of Shemeaiah, the numb and half frozen form of Hillel was discovered. The ambitious pupil was brought into the warm school-room and restored to consciousness by the ministrations of his teachers who declared that such zeal as his justified a transgression of the

Sabbath law. In his thirst for learning, Hillel is said to have acquired knowledge of a novel sort, becoming conversant with the language of mountains, valleys, plants, trees, wild beasts and demons, as well as the tongues of all races and nations of men. His gentleness and love of peace as well as his learning was proverbial. The most famous of the many wise sayings attributed to him is that in which he summarized the law for the benefit of a heathen. "What you would yourself dislike never do to your neighbor; that is the whole law, all else is only its application."

Whether Shammai was one and the same as that Sameas or Shammai who alone of all the Sanhedrin dared to condemn the youthful Herod when he was brought before the great assembly for trial, it is impossible to say. Tradition tells us that he was noted for his severity, insisting that his infant grandson should observe the Feast of Tabernacles when only a day old; and his rigid maintenance of all the details of the oral tradition is said to have made his followers more numerous than those of the gentle Hillel.

A scribe might be either a Pharisee or a Sadducee but from his nature which was in many respects identical with that of the Pharisees, he more often belonged to the latter party. The Pharisees and the Sadducees sprang from two

divergent and often conflicting tendencies of long standing. The Pharisees were the strictly legal party, the concentrated essence of that phase of Judaism which had originated with Ezra and Nehemiah. As the Chasidim or "pious," they had suffered martyrdom under Antiochus Epiphanes and had sacrificed life and property in the desperate conflict for religious freedom under Judas Maccabeus. At first the friends and loyal supporters of the Asmonean monarchs, they became the bitter opponents of John Hyrcanus when he had made law and religion secondary to political advancement, and it was during his reign that they first received the name of Pharisees and Separatists. They were completely dominated by one idea, that of the law, and looked out upon life from its contracted viewpoint, vigorously opposing as evil all that conflicted with its letter. Political independence and material prosperity which would involve contact with profane and unclean nations, were resigned in the hope that they might be amply restored at the coming of the promised Messiah; and the burdensome law was kept by faithful Pharisees with scrupulous exactness because of the reward which awaited its disciple in heaven. The consistency with which they maintained the supremacy of their ideal gave them a lasting vitality and such a tremendous influence over the people that the Sadducees were

often forced to submit to their demands to retain a place in the Sanhedrin. The two conflicting beliefs that God directs the most ordinary events of every day life—even if a man should cut his finger it was the belief of the Pharisees that the accident had been preordained by God—and that human beings are themselves responsible for what they do and say sometimes led the Pharisees to odd inconsistencies in conduct. When, for instance, Herod the Great with the Romans besieged Jerusalem, the Pharisees commanded the people to open the gates of the city to the besieging army as it was the will of God that they should submit to the rule of the heathen; but when a few days later, they were ordered to take the oath of allegiance to Rome, they refused to do so because God was their king and it was their duty to obey Him alone.

The order or fraternity in which Pharisaism reached its climax was comparatively limited in number, consisting according to Josephus, of six thousand members. To join this exclusive league, the applicant must take a vow in the presence of three Rabbis to abstain from everything which had not been tithed and to observe the numerous laws of cleanness and uncleanness. One might if he chose, become a Neeman or accredited one with whom it was safe to engage in commerce by taking only the first of these vows; but he could

become a Chaber or Pharisee of highest rank only when he had pledged himself to observe both classes of restrictions. The vow in regard to tithing led to all sorts of complications as it prohibited one who had taken it from buying of a Gentile or receiving hospitality from any but his own nation, and made it imperative that every fruit merchant and grocer should join the fraternity. A Chaber would no more associate with an Amhaarez or countryman who knew not the law and was accursed than a Jew of ordinary rank would associate with a Gentile. According to the Mishna "He who takes upon himself to be a Chaber sells neither fresh nor dry fruit to the Amhaarez, buys from them no fresh fruit, does not enter their houses as a guest, nor receive them as guests within their walls."

The isolated pedestal upon which a Pharisee was placed by his vows gave him a sense of self-satisfied sanctity and superiority, although his obligations became finally so numerous and burdensome that he not infrequently evaded them. In the time of Christ, the lofty ideal of the Maccabean martyrs had been supplanted by vanity and insincerity, and even in the Talmud, the "plague of Pharisaism" is slightly spoken of. A silly pietist, a clever sinner, and a female Pharisee are ranked among the troubles of life; and in both the Talmuds, seven kinds of Phar-

isees are enumerated, only one of which is said to be the true Pharisee or Pharisee from love.

Opposed to the extremes of the Pharisees were the Sadducees, the nobles and aristocrats of Judea, from whose ranks the high priest was chosen. Throughout the long years of Persian and Greek dominance, the high priest had been the political as well as the religious head of the nation, and had been entrusted with whatever power the Gentile masters of Israel had seen fit to confer upon the nation. The family of the presiding prince and high priest, and the families from which former high priests had been chosen held the highest social positions in Judea. The wealth obtained from their various emoluments, the tithes and first fruits which the law compelled the people to pay for their support, afforded them superior advantages for education and enlightenment. Their horizon had moreover been broadened by friendly relations with heathen kings and contact with the Greek culture which many of them had adopted. Among them were the Hellenists who had shirked their part in the Maccabean uprising—a delinquency for which the Chasidim had never forgiven them—and the broader minded followers of Judas Maccabeus who had favored his alliance with Rome. When Judas Hyrcanus' policy of political advancement had made a break with the Pharisees necessary, his

priestly supporters first received the name Sadducee, a word derived from Zadok, the name of the high priest who officiated in the reign of Solomon and whose family was still prominent in Jerusalem.

The most pronounced distinction between the Pharisees and Sadducees lay in their attitude toward the oral tradition which the Sadducees did not consider binding and kept or broke at will. With their superior enlightenment, they could not fail to see the absurdity and pettiness of the extremes of Pharisaism. It was moreover impossible for them to maintain its exclusive laws of cleanness and uncleanness, and at the same time make the alliances with heathen nations which their policy of political advancement demanded. As the New Testament indicates, they did not believe in the resurrection of the body; and their idea of the hereafter of the soul was an existence in Sheol so vague and distorted that they preferred to labor for the things which could be seen and handled, rather than risk all for the shadowy and uncertain blessings of a world to come. Gradually their materialism and indifference to Pharisaic ideals had created a schism between themselves and the people until in the time of Christ, oddly enough, the scribes and lawyers had become the clergy of the nation and the priests its nobles and politicians. "Improbable as it may

seem they were the real patriots with the motto Israel above all! Israel's honor, Israel's dignity and Israel's freedom were their guiding stars."

Until the fall of Jerusalem, the Sadducees controlled the political affairs of the nation, but when the Jews no longer existed politically, the Sadducees also ceased to exist and even their own people did not know what the principles of the party had been.

Apart from the soil and grime of Jewish public life, which neither the Pharisees nor the Sadducees had altogether escaped, there lived in the second century before Christ yet another sect, the Essenes, who, like mystics and ascetics of all generations, the monks of mediæval ages and our own respected Shakers, strove to reach ideal peace and purity by withdrawing from the world and living in seclusion a life of simplicity and righteousness. Their largest settlement was on the oasis of Engedi by the Dead Sea; but isolated houses of the order might be found in every large town of Palestine. The society consisted of about four thousand men and women, and could be entered only after three years' probation. Each community was presided over by a president to whom its members must render implicit obedience and to whom candidates might apply for admission. After one year of probation, the novice was allowed to share the purifying lus-

trations of the order and when two more years of faithful service had passed, a fearful oath to conceal nothing from his brethren and to preserve the secrets of the order from outsiders made him a member in good standing, and he was admitted to the common meals.

The Essene was relieved from the burdens of poverty and temptations of wealth by the law which allowed him to accumulate no property, but required him rather to depend for the necessities of daily life upon the common purse, the contents of which were shared by all the brethren. Whoever entered the order delivered over houses, slaves, flocks or any other property he possessed to a common manager, and the daily wages of each member also replenished the common purse which provided for the needs of all. Common food and common clothing, overalls for winter and white linen robes for the sacrificial feasts, were purchased by chosen managers; and any member who wished to aid the poor might borrow from the common store, the extent of his charity being restricted only in the case of relatives. Sick or aged Essenes need feel no anxiety about their support, as they were tenderly cared for by young and healthy members of the order and their every want supplied from the common purse.

Each day the Essene followed the same routine.

rising early in the morning and praying with his face turned toward the rising sun before he uttered a 'profane' or secular word. He then went to his labor which was most frequently agriculture. Trade was forbidden because it might lead to covetousness, but any sort of handicraft except the manufacture of weapons was permissible. He returned from work in time to don his white linen robe before going to the common dining hall where a priest who was also the baker, served all with bread and vegetables. No one was permitted to taste the food until prayer had been offered by the priest who also prayed at the end of the meal. After all had honored God as the giver of food, they changed their robes and returned to their work until time for the evening meal, which was conducted in exactly the same way.

The integrity of the Essenes was such that they were more respected by the Greeks and Romans than any other class of Jews. They were excessively frugal, honest and modest. Slavery was abolished in their communities, swearing was forbidden, and every word that was said by them was more reliable than the oath of other men. Shoes and clothing were not thrown aside until they were utterly useless and at their meals, they were "contented with the same dish day by day, loving sufficiency and rejecting great expense as

harmful to both mind and body." Marriage was forsworn, but children were adopted by the adult members of the order to be trained in the principles of Essenism.

Their origin, even the derivation of their name, is wrapped in mystery and has been the subject of much speculation. Many of their beliefs and customs indicate that the order was a peculiar offshoot from the root of Judaism; others that a Hellenistic graft had been joined with the Pharisaic stem. Like the Jews, they believed that God was the author of an unalterable faith and esteemed the law and law-giver above all else, punishing with death anyone who blasphemed the name of Moses. The Sabbath was even more strictly kept by them than by the Pharisees, and their laws of separation and purification were exaggerated phases of Pharisaic rules. They would not move a dish from its place upon the Sabbath, and contact with a member of a lower order made a purifying lustration necessary. Certain other characteristics, their efforts for simplicity of life, their rejection of trade, their abstinence and frugality were alien to the ideals of Pharisees. Even more completely removed from the realm of Pharisaism was their attitude toward animal sacrifice which they completely repudiated, and in which they refused to participate. They chose their own priests from the

descendants of the house of Aaron, and expressed their respect for Jewish authorities by sending gifts of incense to the temple.

Their reverence for the sun in whose brightness they beheld an emblem of the divine radiance was also a departure from the traditions of Judaism. When they prayed, they did not turn their faces toward the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem, but rather toward the light of the Sun. They also refrained from committing any unclean act in the presence of the great luminary lest they offend its brightness. These customs point toward mingled Hellenistic and Oriental influences but if, as Josephus would have us believe, the Essenes taught the pre-existence of the soul and believed that the body was its prison, it must be true that Hellenism and especially the philosophy of the Greek Pythagoras had much to do with the molding of this exemplary order, which is called by Ewald the conscience of the Jewish nation.

CHAPTER XIII

HELLENISM AND JUDAISM

The Hellenism brought to the East by Alexander the Great was, as we have seen, gently and gradually drawing the Jews into its magnetic and friendly current when they were startled to a consciousness of their imperiled individuality by the barbaric violence of Antiochus Epihanes; and the influx of Greek culture was abruptly checked by the persecution and the subsequent victories of the Maccabees. But the triumph was not final. Hellenism was too intangible and subtle a force to be destroyed by the sword and, like a contagious disease, was checked in one place only to break out in another. It had become a part of the Eastern atmosphere and its influence upon every phase of Oriental life was as inescapable and irresistible as that of the sun or rain upon vegetation. "It was to become the culture of the world and its tide could not be turned. Like other nations, the Jews must submit to the time spirit, that tyrannos who rules all in their thinking, speaking, and doing whether they list or not."

The Asmonean monarchs, whose ancestors the Maccabees, had so violently opposed Hellenism gave their children Greek names, employed foreign mercenaries, issued foreign coins; and one of their number was the openly avowed friend and disciple of the Greeks. The Roman conquerors of Greece had also succumbed to the seduction of Greek culture, and at the coming of the Romans and the Herodians, a new wave of mingled Latin and Greek culture swept over Palestine.

A survey of Palestine in the reign of Herod the Great shows how deeply dyed in Hellenism was nearly every phase of Oriental life. In the chain of Gentile cities which encircled the central Jewish provinces, Judea, Perea, and Galilee, Hellenism had met with no opposition and an amalgamation of Greek and Oriental culture in which Hellenism was the dominant element, prevailed. The Philistines and Phoenicians worshipped the gods of the Greeks, and their coins bore the images of Zeus, Athene, Pan and other Greek divinities. In Cæsarea and many of the coast towns, temples to the Cæsars had been erected by Herod the Great, and the games so closely linked with the religious rites of the Romans had also been established by him. Even better proofs of their deeply Hellenistic spirit were the men prominent in Greek letters who were produced by them,

Antiochus, a teacher of Cicero, the grammarian Ptolemais, and Theodorus, the tutor of the Emperor Tiberius, all emanating from these outer cities of Palestine.

An abundance of Greek and Latin words found in the Mishna indicate that, in the central provinces, the scribes' hatred of Hellenism had not affected other departments of life than religion; for the government, military service, trade and industry, art, social life, fashions and ornaments of these provinces all bowed before the superiority of Greek intelligence and bore the impress of the Greek mind. The Greek names by which the governor, the soldiers, and the weapons of Palestine were designated bore witness to their Hellenistic origin, and public baths and inns also bore Greek names. Public games like those swept away by the persecution had been again introduced by Herod and although the Pharisees disapproved of them, we have no reason to suppose that they were not well attended. The many buildings erected by Herod the Great were of the Græco-Roman style of architecture, the penetrating Hellenistic culture intruding even upon the forecourts of the Jewish temple itself with its Corinthian pillars and fluted colonnades. In commerce also, the Jews of Palestine imitated the customs of their heathen neighbors, buying and selling for Roman coin with Greek inscriptions, the luxuries

and necessities used by the great Gentile world with which they were surrounded. Trading with heathen neighbors had made a slight knowledge of the Greek language general, and it is probable that it was well-known among the educated classes.

In one instance only had the progress of Hellenism been successfully arrested. Every approach to Judaism had been doubly locked and barred against Greek idolatry by the ceaseless activity of the scribes. The Mosaic commandment "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of anything" was so literally interpreted that statues of men, birds, or beasts used for ornamental purposes only, must be rigorously banished. The images with which Herod had adorned his palace at Jerusalem were regarded with abhorrence, and when Pilate entered Judea with the Roman eagles at the head of his legions, there was a tumultuous uprising. The Jews were forbidden to transact business of any sort with Gentiles three days before and three days after a heathen festival; and a ban was placed upon articles connected in any way with heathen worship.

One Hellenistic wedge alone pierced the barriers of Pharisaism. The great labor and pains expended upon compiling the Hebrew edition of the sacred books had made them very expensive

and their price had placed them quite beyond the reach of the common people. In Rome, on the contrary, hundreds of slaves were employed in copying what one dictated, and their gratuitous labor had reduced the price of Greek and Roman manuscripts until the cost of the Septuagint or Greek version of the Hebrew Bible was only about twice that of our present people's edition. The comparatively low cost of the Septuagint had made it the Bible commonly used in Galilee and even in Judea, and the Apocryphal books which it included afforded its readers a glimpse into the fascinating, but forbidden regions of Greek philosophy. Although these books were placed by Jewish scholars many degrees below the level of the canonical books of the Bible, the glorification of Jews and Judaism in which their authors indulged won the favor of the Rabbis; but how sternly any inclination to stray farther along the paths of Hellenistic thought was repressed is indicated by the story of a young Rabbi who after mastering every phase of the Jewish law, begged to be allowed to study Greek philosophy. A venerable uncle checked his profane longing by quoting Joshua 1, 8 and saying "Go and search what is that hour which is neither of the day nor night and in it thou mayest study Greek philosophy." These Jewish Rabbis had yet to learn that true piety reaches out beyond itself and that the

deepest and most sincere religious belief goes hand in hand with inquiry. Under the sway of the scribes, the atmosphere of Judea had become too stifling for the development of that precious germ of revelation which the Jews had borne down through the ages; for the wondrous revelation their authorities were soon to reject.

But while ancient Judaism, behind the contracted barriers she had erected, held fast to the shell of the oral tradition, looking with pride upon its curious convolutions, listening ever and anon to its hollow murmur, the Jews of the dispersion in Alexandria were forging the first links in the chain which was to bind Hellenism to Judaism and through it, to Christianity. Transplanted from insulated Judea to the city which bore the name of its great founder and over which his tutor Aristotle held sway, they breathed a freer air, led a more untrammelled life. Under the friendly rule of the Ptolemies, the Jews were the only colonists in Alexandria to receive political privileges equal to those of the Greeks, and although they lived in a community by themselves and were governed by their own alabarch, the exigencies of trade and of the other occupations by which they earned a livelihood had made them Hellenists, that is, Jews who spoke the language and adopted the customs of their Greek neighbors. The brilliant Greek culture which they met

daily in the market-place and the forum could not fail to appeal to the Jewish mind; but notwithstanding its fascination, the Alexandrian immigrants were still loyal Jews, faithfully and proudly maintaining the services of the synagogue and looking with contempt upon the frivolity of the Greeks and their barbaric and meaningless religious rites. While other colonists, even those who had a faith of their own, joined in worshipping the gods of their home town the Jews steadfastly refused to participate in idolatry of any kind or to join in emperor worship when it became prevalent. The abruptness with which Judaism stood out against the background of the Græco-Roman world while all other religions blended with it, made it a conspicuous point of attack. It incurred the criticism and hostility of the Greeks, and accusations of all kinds emanated from the heathen Alexandrians.

The Jews had made no contribution to world culture, they declared. Their origin was inferior, for were not their ancestors leprous Egyptians who had migrated to Palestine? They were atheists because they refused to worship the gods of the Greeks; they were bad citizens because they would not worship the Roman Emperor whose protection they enjoyed. More serious, because it was not wholly ungrounded, was the complaint of the Greeks that in repudi-

ating the Alexandrian belief that all men are brethren and equal before God, the Jews had branded themselves as inhumane and haters of their fellow-men. No dreamy absorption in the law, written or oral, was possible in an atmosphere charged with such pointed missiles, and the Alexandrian Jews must be constantly on the alert to meet and parry the thrusts of the Greeks and their philosophy. The questions suggested by the subtle and penetrating Greek mind could not be answered by puerile sophistries, and the Jews who endeavored to respond to them were both startled and chagrined to find fresh truth and beauty in the philosophy of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics. The Alexandrian Jew must meet "argument with argument, and that not only for those who were without, but in order himself to be quite sure of what he believed. He must be able to hold the truth not only in controversy with others where pride might bid him stand fast, but in that much more serious contest within, where a man meets the old adversary in the secret arena of his own mind and has to sustain that terrible hand-to-hand fight in which he is uncheered by outward help. But why should he shrink from the conflict when he was sure that his was the divine truth and that therefore victory must be on his side?" To one truth at least he felt he might hold fast. Moses

the lawgiver was the greatest of all men and the law given to him by God for his chosen people contained the basis of all goodness and truth. If the nobler elements of Greek philosophy were not apparent on the surface of the Hebrew Bible, by penetrating beneath the outer crust, he might surely find the hidden gold and in consequence a host of literary productions for the purpose of upholding Judaism against the attacks of the heathen and proving that the Hebrew Bible contained all that was best in Greek philosophy sprang into existence.

The letter of the fictitious Aristeas, which proclaims the anxiety of Ptolemy Philadelphus to procure a translation of the Jewish Scriptures, was evidently written to uphold the dignity of Judaism in the eyes of the heathen; and the Septuagint was the first plank in the bridge which was to cross the chasm between Jews and Gentiles. Among other productions written with the same object in mind were the Fourth book of Maccabees, numerous pseudonymic books, and the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon in which, as has already been said, we find a first faint premonition of the warmth and humanity of the Christian faith.

The first Jewish author, however, who wrote with the openly avowed intention of extracting from the Jewish Bible all the nobler elements of

Greek philosophy was Aristobulus, an Alexandrian Jew, who probably lived in the second century before Christ. Primarily the disciple of Aristotle, he was also a faithful Jew and boldly asserts in his commentary on the Pentateuch, a fragment of which only has been preserved to us, that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato derived their philosophies from Moses, and that the Greek poets Homer and Hesiod also borrowed much from him. The method which he used to prove the startling conclusions at which he arrived was that of allegorical interpretation, already employed by Plato and the Stoics to find a deeper meaning in the writings of Homer. By applying it to mythical stories or popular beliefs and by tracing the supposed symbolical meaning of names, numbers, etc, it became easy to prove almost anything, or to extract from philosophical truths, ethical principles and even the later results of natural science. "Such a process was peculiarly pleasing to the imagination and the results alike astounding and satisfactory, since as they could not be proved, neither could they be disproved. The allegorical method was the welcome key by which the Hellenists might unlock the hidden treasury of Scripture." By it Aristobulus brought the whole system of Aristotle out of the Bible. "When we read that God stood, it meant the stable order of the world; that He created

the world in six days, the orderly succession of time; the rest of the Sabbath, the preservation of what was created." So determined was Aristobulus in his purpose, he was not to be thwarted by a dearth of the historical evidence which the public demanded. Literary honor in the second century before Christ was not what it is today, and etiquette lauded the modesty of one who attributed his own work to another. If therefore proof that Greek poetry and philosophy had been derived from the teachings of Moses did not exist, Aristobulus felt no hesitation in creating it. Anonymous poems had often been attributed to Orpheus, the mythical singer of Thrace whose sweet music is said to have charmed men and wild beasts. Aristobulus therefore audaciously asserted that Orpheus had been taught by the Jewish lawgiver whom he had met in Egypt; and certain quotations decidedly Jewish in character were added to the list of the Thracian charmer's supposed writings. Other quotations of Jewish origin inserted in Aristobulus' commentary on the Pentateuch were assigned to Homer, Hesiod, and Linus.

Fired by the example of Aristobulus, other Hellenists were not slow to follow in his footsteps. Jewish wisdom emanating from the Sibyls who were consulted by Greece and Rome in times of public danger and misfortune, would be

most convincing to the cultured heathen. This opportunity was eagerly embraced and a collection of Sybylline oracles of Jewish origin was the result. Other books written to edify and perhaps convert the heathen, as the Psalter of Solomon, the book of Enoch, and the book of Jubilees, were also ascribed to false authors.

But the man who completed and systematized the work begun by Aristobulus was Philo, a Jewish philosopher, born in Alexandria between 10 and 20 B. C. With the exception of Josephus, Philo was the most prominent of all the Hellenists. His father was one of the wealthiest and most influential of Alexandria's merchant princes and his brother the alabarch of the Jewish community of that city. He was himself, in his old age, one of the ambassadors sent to Caligula to beg for the removal of the images which had caused great disturbance in Judea. Philo had acquired a profound knowledge of Greek philosophy. He was at the same time an enthusiastic believer in the faith of his race, and, like Aristobulus, was determined to find one in the other. Pythagoras, Plato, and the Stoics were to him great and revered teachers, not pagan Greeks; but greater and more revered than any other was Moses whose message was divinely inspired, whose authority he acknowledged as supreme.

By interweaving the many and diverse strands

of Greek philosophy and Jewish religion, Philo produced a philosophy whose design was original with himself. Of the numerous books written by him, the commentary on Genesis is the one best calculated to illustrate the principles of his theory of life. Certain eternal verities known to all men and all ages, were found in both the Jewish Scriptures and books of Greek wisdom. Encouraged by this resemblance, Philo believed that a profound study of the Scriptures would prove that Greek philosophers had learned their wisdom from Moses, the greatest and wisest of all men, and like his predecessors, used the method of allegorical interpretation to establish the supremacy of the Jewish law-giver. He was convinced that beneath the outer husk of literal and historical truth lay the more valuable kernels, truths concerning the supreme problems of human existence. In the slaying of the Egyptian by Moses, he beheld the subjugation of passion; in Simeon, the soul aiming for higher things. The Palestinian Jews had already used this method of interpretation in the Haggadah but in Philo's hands the method became much more penetrating and far-reaching. He not only touched everything, beasts, birds, plants, stones, conditions and substances, even sex, with the magic wand of his symbolism, but he took unwarranted liberties with the text. The spelling

of words was altered, and special significance was attached to the choice and use of words, the position of paragraphs and even the use of an unexpected singular or plural. Every adverb, participle, and preposition had its special hidden meaning.

The God discovered in the Jewish Bible by him was, strangely enough, not the God of Israel's priests, but the God of the Greek philosophers. Like Plato and his followers, he believed God was not only free from human faults, but far above human virtues and incomprehensible to man's limited apprehensions. It was thus possible to say not what He was, but only what He was not, a Being whom man could not know, a vague and unsatisfactory Something who existed neither in time nor space, who was devoid of all human qualities. This absence of attributes was contradicted by the Stoic and Jewish idea that God was indwelling and omnipresent, the light and well-spring of the soul. It was believed that all perfection was derived from God, but only the soul could be directly created by Him, for with matter He could have nothing to do. Since contact with matter might mar the perfection of God and stain His beauty, the works of creation and providence must be accomplished through the agency of intermediary beings. This idea was not new to either Jews or Greeks,

for the former were accustomed to think of angels, and the latter of daemons as the messengers of God. Intangible and impersonal forces working in the world had been represented by Plato's doctrine of ideas and the Stoic doctrine of active causes. All four doctrines were combined in Philo's theory of intermediary beings with confusing inconsistency. The atmosphere, according to Philo, was filled with souls. Those attracted by sensuous delights, rested nearest the earth and were caught and imprisoned in bodies. Those who dwelt higher in the atmosphere were the medium through which God revealed himself to men. They issued from God as "beams from the light, as the waters from the spring, as the breath from a person." They were both messenger and message, both personal and impersonal. Great among these forces were might and goodness, but most universal and supreme of all was the power appropriately named by Philo the *λογος* or word; for as man by words expresses to others the thoughts and purposes of his inner self, so the Logos was God's expression of himself to man. It was the wire by means of which messages might be sent from God to man and from man to God; it was also the vice-regent and ambassador of God; the instrument by which He created the world; and the high priest of the human race; a force similar in

some respects to the Jewish Wisdom of God and the Greek Spirit and Word of God.

The body was to Philo the prison and burden of the soul, the grave and coffin from whose innate evil man could not escape even for a single day. Morality consequently consisted in rooting out all sensuous desires and living a clean, honest and simple life. Thus far Philo had followed the signal lights of the Stoics, but in carrying out their theory, he trod a path of his own which led toward Christianity.

To become virtuous and happy, he believed that man must receive help from God. The soul which had been bound to a body by its distance from God might by study and discipline rise till it could behold His glory and goodness and forgetting self, like a clear pool, reflect the beauty and brightness of vision. "His own consciousness sinks and disappears in the Divine light and the Spirit of God dwells in him and stirs him like the strings of a musical instrument." To thus behold God would bring to human beings the greatest of all earthly happiness. One step further only would lead to perfection, the death of the body and the freedom of the soul.

This rapid passage over a few points of Philo's philosophy will be sufficient to convince the Bible student that although the doctrine of the Hellenist sage had little lasting influence upon either

Judaism or Hellenism, it paved the way for the coming of Christianity. When John, the beloved disciple of Christ, was endeavoring to impart to the Ephesians, among whom he dwelt, the message of his Lord, he could find no more suitable mold for the new doctrine than that already familiar to both Jew and Greek, the divine Logos as the light, life and well-spring of a restless and dissatisfied world. But in his hands, the vague and shadowy Logos of Philo became a living and loving Being "full of grace and truth," and God a tender Father rather than a distant and abstract force.*

* See Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*.

CHAPTER XIV

THE JEWS AND THE ROMANS

When the wishes of Antiochus Epiphanes clashed with those of Rome and the emissaries from the rival factions met in council on the Egyptian sea-shore, the Roman envoy enclosed the space upon which Antiochus stood with a circle drawn in the sand beyond the circumference of which the mad monarch might not pass until he had first obeyed the ultimatum of Rome “*ετανθα βουλεύον*”—decide now.

The decision with which Rome crushed the ambitious scheme of the Syrian king was characteristic of her treatment of her subordinates and Judea with other Roman provinces early learned the bitter lesson that punishment, sure and terrible, swiftly followed any transgression of the circumscribed limitations imposed by Rome. The great temple at Jerusalem was built, ostensibly indeed, with all consideration for Jewish prejudices and Pharisaic whims, but at its completion, the golden eagle of Rome, doubly hateful as a graven image whose presence was forbidden by Mosaic law and as a symbol of Roman domi-

nance, was placed above its most frequented entrance. Every fiber of Jewish being protested against this insult to Jehovah, Ruler of the universe, and when at last Herod was laid low by fatal illness, forty young Pharisees, pupils of the respected Rabbis, Judas and Mattathias, climbed to the top of Nicanor's gate and hacked the golden eagle to pieces with their axes. Such a flagrant act of insubordination could not be overlooked, though Herod lay upon his death-bed. The culprits with their teachers, were dragged by Roman soldiers to Jericho, sentenced by the old king, and burned alive. This incident only foreshadowed that which was to come. The history of Judea from the death of Herod the Great until 70 A. D. is an oft-repeated story of violent collision between the inflexible Roman and irrepressible Jew. "All-powerful Rome could destroy Israel, but not pervert it. Israel did not give way to Rome to the extent of even a single thought." And, although the period when Palestine was ruled first by the sons of Herod and later by Roman procurators does not properly belong to the interim between the Testaments, a brief survey of these troubled years is given here as necessary to any comprehension of the relations existing between the two nations.

The frequent executions with which Herod thinned the ranks of his numerous family com-

pelled him to make three wills, the last of which received the confirmation and approval of Augustus and governed the destiny of Palestine during the first years of the Christian era. By its terms, Herod's kingdom was divided among three of his surviving sons. The northern provinces were bequeathed to Philip who in some marvelous way had escaped the taint of his inheritance and environment and for thirty-seven years governed his kingdom wisely and well. Galilee and Perea became the domain of Antipas well-known to Bible history as the sovereign of Jesus and the executor of John the Baptist. For thirty-five years he maintained the balance between his Jewish subjects and their Roman sovereigns by a craftily feigned allegiance to the interests of both. The ambitious scheme of his unlawful wife Herodias by whom he was completely dominated, finally led to his downfall. In 39 A. D., he was accused of conspiring against the Roman government and was banished to Lyons in Gaul where he spent the remainder of his life. Archelaus to whom the provinces of Judea, Idumea, and Samaria, had been assigned, was the most violent of the three brothers, divorcing and marrying wives and removing and appointing high priests at will. After nine years of misrule, a delegation of Jews and Samaritans appeared before Augustus bringing accusations of such a

serious nature against their ruler that he was deposed and condemned to life banishment in Gaul.

Ten years before the banishment of Archelaus, an embassy of Jews had begged Augustus to free their country from the curse of Herodian rulers and to allow them to live according to their own laws under the immediate supervision of a Roman governor. That request was now granted. Judea and subsequently all Palestine was annexed to the Roman province of Syria; its government was placed in the hands of a Roman procurator and it entered the third class of Roman dependencies, those which were particularly difficult to govern either on account of their savage state or the tenacity with which they clung to their native customs.

The high hopes with which the Jews entered upon this change of government were doomed to bitter down-fall and disappointment; for while the Herods during their long residence in Judea had obtained an insight into Jewish character and had become convinced of the futility of interfering with that which lay nearest their hearts, their religious rites, the Jews were now exposed to the merciless rapacity of Roman officials to whom their religion was, in the words of Cicero, a "barbarous superstition" and its adherents "a race distinguished for its contempt

of the gods." The politics and religion of the Romans were inextricably interwoven and unstinted devotion to an Unseen Being who bestowed no material or political reward upon his worshippers seemed to them both grotesque and impractical. The Sabbath rest was to them only an excuse for indolence and the abstinence from swine's flesh the result of an ancestral veneration for the pig. They resented the persistent refusal of the Jew to join in the emperor worship then prevalent, and the pride with which Israelites held themselves aloof from foreigners was repaid by the Roman with such scorn and contempt that the pathetic sadness with which Philo asks for his country-men no better fate than to be treated as other men can occasion no wonder.

The procurator lived in Cæsarea, occupying Herod's palace at Jerusalem only upon Jewish feast days when the city swarmed with pilgrims and there was most danger of riot and disturbance. He administered the finances of the province and was commander-in-chief of its military forces, answerable only in extreme cases to the legate of Syria and the supreme authorities at Rome. Civil and criminal cases were as a rule left to native and local courts, but the sentence of any court including the Sanhedrin, might be affirmed or annulled by his decree. Only in cases

of life and death was it possible for a Roman citizen to escape his authority by appealing to Cæsar. The restrictions which the Jews resented most bitterly were those imposed upon the temple and its belongings, the Roman guard stationed in its outer court, the contents of its treasury administered by the Roman procurator, and most insufferable of all, the beautiful robe of the high priest entrusted to the Roman commandant of the fortress Antonia whence its owners were permitted to take it only upon the four feast days of the Jewish year.

It is true that Judaism received the favor and protection of many of the Roman emperors. The Jews were not obliged to take part in the emperor worship which was compulsory in other provinces, and the military standards bearing the likeness of the emperor were excluded from Judea because they were offensive to its citizens. On account of their inconvenient habit of Sabbath observance, they were granted freedom from military service, and the law which forbade foreigners to enter the inner courts of the temple upon pain of death was strictly enforced even in the case of Roman citizens. But all this availed little when for the administration of these enactments, the Jews must depend upon Roman officials who almost invariably considered Jewish life and property their rightful prey, and by

making Jewish religion the object of ridicule and coarse jests, brought their subjects to such a pitch of nervous excitement that the latter resented the most reasonable act of the Roman authorities as an infringement of the divine rights of God's chosen people whom all the other nations of the world should serve.

Excessive and burdensome taxes extorted from the Jews had been a feature of the reign of the Herods. The suspicions of the people were therefore aroused when immediately after the appointment of the first procurator, preparations were made for readjusting the system of taxes according to the Roman method; and the high priest had all that he could do to keep the undercurrent of hatred and discontent from breaking into open rebellion. As a result of this suppressed outbreak, the more fanatical of the Pharisees formed themselves into a party called Zealots whose only purpose was never to submit to Rome and to oppose her authority in every way. They kept the cauldron of Jewish hatred hot, and the ebullitions of Jewish wrath by which Judea was frequently scarred were often occasioned by the heat of their rebellious ill-will.

A storm of protest which could not be quelled arose when in 26 A.D. the fifth procurator Pontius Pilate, set up in Jerusalem the soldier's standards hitherto excluded from Judea. As

soon as the news had been published throughout Jerusalem and the surrounding country, a motley throng consisting of five thousand men, women, and children gathered and set out for Cæsarea. For five days the palace of the procurator was surrounded by a howling and shrieking mob who demanded the removal of the offensive standards. Pilate tried in vain to silence the throng by declaring that he could not so dishonor the emperor as to grant their request. At the end of the sixth day, he repeated his refusal in the stadium whither he had invited the angry crowd to receive his decision. Then the outcries broke forth afresh and the soldiers by whom the theater was surrounded advanced upon the mob with drawn swords; but the Jews baring their necks and breasts, signified that they would rather die than witness such sacrilege and Pilate, moved by their desperation, quietly ordered the removal of the ensigns. In the latter part of his term of office, Pilate again ventured to place shields bearing the name of the emperor but no image, in the temple of Herod at Jerusalem. This also the Jews refused to endure and a delegation of prominent men among whom were the four sons of Herod brought their protestations to the procurator. As he remained inflexible, a petition was sent to the Roman emperor Tiberius who perceiving that Pilate cared less to honor him

than to torment the Jews, ordered the tablets removed to the temple of Augustus in Cæsarea. "Thus were the honor of the emperor and the ancient customs of the city both preserved."

Fresh trouble arose when Tiberius was succeeded by the half-demented tyrant Caligula who actually believed in his own divinity and regarded the Jews' refusal to join in emperor worship as a personal affront. Heathen altars and images in Jamnia were destroyed by the Jews, and to avenge the insult, Caligula ordered the preparation of a life-sized statue of himself which he proposed to set up in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem. The preparation of the statue was delayed by the humanity of the Syrian legate Petronius and before the order was carried out, a powerful advocate appeared to plead the cause of the Jews. Agrippa, a son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod and Mariamne, while sowing a crop of youthful wild oats in Rome, had become the friend and boon companion of Caligula. To this old comrade the emperor could refuse nothing, and because he begged him not to carry out his threat, the temple remained undisturbed. Through the influence of Caligula and his successor Claudius, all Palestine became in 41 A. D. the united realm of Agrippa and for three short, but happy years, the precepts of the Pharisees

were treated with reverence and the golden age of Alexandra returned to Judea.

The reign of Agrippa had proved that a little tact and sympathy might work wonders in Palestine, but the seven Roman procurators who succeeded him made no effort to follow his example, but rather did everything in their power to widen the already threatening breach beyond repair. From the cruelty and injustice of Felix sprang the Sicarii, a set of fanatics who received their name from the dagger (*sica*) which they concealed beneath their cloaks. They mingled with the people in public assemblies and on the streets, and stabbed Romans and Roman sympathizers, deceiving their opponents by the deep grief they feigned when their victims fell. The combined efforts of political fanatics and the religious fanatics who also infested the country, produced wild agitation and unrest. "They persuaded the Jews to revolt and parting themselves into different bodies, lay in wait up and down the country and plundered the houses of great men and slew the men themselves and set the villages on fire; and this till all Judea was filled with their madness." The last two procurators were at the same time the worst. The avarice of the first, Albinus, was proverbial. He considered money-grabbing the chief duty and privilege of his office.

Private property and public treasure were the prey of his incontrollable greed; and for a bribe, any criminal, however vicious, might obtain release from prison. "Hence the prisons were empty and the whole country overrun by robbers." The success with which Albinus committed infamies encouraged Florus, his successor to practise all kinds of crime openly and upon a larger scale. Robbing private individuals was quite too small a matter to engage his attention. Whole communities were robbed and whole cities plundered. Robbers who would share their booty with him were allowed to carry on their nefarious business without interference. Multitudes left their homes and fled into foreign provinces. When Cestius Gallus, the Syrian legate, visited Jerusalem during the week of the pass-over, he was surrounded by a great throng of Jewish pilgrims who besought him with tears in their eyes to free them from the intolerable cruelty of their governor; and Florus who was present, resolved then and there to goad his unhappy subjects until they committed the irreparable folly of declaring war against Rome. In the confusion of a revolt, his own crime would be buried and its consequences escaped. He acted upon his conviction and things went rapidly from bad to worse. In Cæsarea, public worship was openly disturbed; and in Jerusalem

indignation reached the boiling point when Florus pretending that the emperor needed money, stole seventeen talents (\$15,000.) from the treasury. The people flocked to the courts of the temple where they filled the air with loud denunciations of the detested procurator; and two wags passed a basket among the crowd to collect alms for the destitute governor now, as always, an object of Jewish charity. Florus was very angry when he heard of the jest and the penalty he exacted was a heavy one. With a company of Roman soldiers, he marched upon Jerusalem; and in the wholesale plunder and slaughter which took place at his command, 3600 men, women, and children, including a large number of Roman knights of Jewish descent, were scourged and then crucified.

Even now the leaders of the excited people succeeded in restoring order and when Florus commanded the rebels to prove their penitence and good intentions by meeting and saluting respectfully two cohorts of Roman soldiers then on their way from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, they were convinced by the priests that it would be folly to refuse this medicine, bitter though it was. But when the respectful salutation of the Jews was received with stony disregard, audible protests and complaints against Florus rose from the Jewish ranks. This was exactly what Florus

had anticipated and the Romans, who had received previous instructions, began to cut the malcontents down. At the same time the Jews were attacked on the other side by Florus and a company of soldiers he had brought from Jerusalem. All Jerusalem hastened to join in the fray, and against the united violence of the Jewish multitude, the Romans were unable to stand. During the night the bridges and approaches to the temple were destroyed by the rebels, and Florus who had hoped to plunder the temple withdrew, leaving Jerusalem in charge of the Jewish leaders and a cohort of Roman soldiers.

Conflicting reports of the outbreak were sent to Cestius Gallus, and a Roman tribune Neapolitanus was despatched by him to Jerusalem to get at the root of the matter. Neapolitanus was so impressed by the cordial welcome and kind treatment he received that he praised the Jews for their good conduct and assured them that all might be well if they would only keep the peace. After his departure, Agrippa II who had accompanied him, warned the people in a long and eloquent speech against the danger of rebellion. By his advice, they restored the approaches to the temple and began to collect the unpaid tribute money; but when he asked them to respect and obey Florus until Cæsar could appoint some

one to take his place, his proposal was received with jeers and a shower of stones. The daily sacrifice for the Roman emperor was discontinued and war was declared.

The sun has never looked down upon a struggle more dreadful than that which from 67-70 A. D. made the holy land a land of blood and fire. Freed from the shackles of Roman power, bigoted fanaticism and fiery hatred, like mad men loosed from a prison-house, terrorized the country with their insane fury and ruled over the city so many times heroically defended in the fear and love of God. Prudence and self-control were scattered to the winds and there was a wild outburst of unreasoning passion. Jerusalem became a city divided against herself. Son rose up against father and father against son.

Faction after faction, locked in civil strife, stained the honor and sapped the strength of the holy city; and the most fearful outrages and frightful atrocities were committed by Jews against Jews before the Romans approached its walls.

The more intelligent Jews, including the Herods, Agrippa, and the leading priests and Pharisees, realized that war with Rome could end in only one way. Since counsel was futile, they resolved to restrain the people by force from the ruin they would inevitably bring upon

themselves and a conflict between those who wished for peace and those who wished for war ensued. The war party led by Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, took possession of the temple fortress; the peace party led by Ananias held the citadel, and blood was shed daily upon the streets of Jerusalem by the opposed forces of father and son. When, finally, a grandson of Judas, the well-known Galilean rebel, came with a large force of Sicarii to the aid of Eleazar, the peace party was obliged to surrender. In hideous delight at their victory, the rebels set fire to the beautiful palaces of Berenice, Agrippa and Ananias', and the aged high priest with his brother was dragged from a place of concealment and killed. The agitation was increased by a quarrel between the Sicarii and the men of Jerusalem; and, in a massacre led by Eleazar, his allies were cut down without mercy and their leader murdered. As a crowning disgrace, the soldiers of the Roman garrison, who had been promised a safe conduct from the city if they would give up their arms, were slain to the last man while honorably keeping their word.

The war had by this time reached every city in Palestine. In Cæsarea alone, twenty thousand Jews were massacred in one hour and

in all the larger towns, Jews were massacred by heathen and heathen by Jews.

Cestius Gallus with a Roman army, tried in vain to capture Jerusalem and restore order. His troops were attacked with such violence at Bethhoron that their orderly retreat was turned into a wild flight; and it was with difficulty that a remnant of his army with its leader escaped to Antioch. This was a victory so much greater than the most sanguine had hoped for that even those who had been most opposed to war were drawn for a moment into the prevailing current. By common consent, Palestine was divided into twelve districts, each commanded by a prominent priest or Pharisee. Opposed to these Jewish leaders whose hands had never held a weapon and whose vocation had been the pursuit of Rabbinical lore or service in the temple, was the man to whom the Romans had entrusted the task of subjugating Palestine, Vespasian, the ablest and most experienced general of his day. The first district attacked was Galilee, the defense of which was conducted by the historian Josephus, then a young scribe of thirty years. In spite of some brave fighting on the part of the Jews and the cunning, but puerile stratagems of their leader, which he relates in his history with the most

complacent self-satisfaction, the result of the campaign was just what the conservative had prophesied. The strongholds of Galilee fell one by one into the hands of the Romans. Cities were ruthlessly levelled to the ground and their inhabitants slain or sold into slavery until at the end of 67 A.D., all Galilee had become the domain of Rome.

Gishcala was the last fortress to fall, but the night before its surrender, a popular hero, John of Gishcala, the impersonation of that savage and lawless spirit which for many years had found an abiding-place in Galilee, escaped under cover of darkness with a company of Zealot followers to Jerusalem. The atmosphere which he found there, disturbed though it was, seemed to John intolerably peaceful and law-abiding and he set himself with energy to effect a reformation. Harangues in which he pronounced the Romans weaklings and denounced the Jewish captains as cowards and traitors, so aroused the younger men that they would no longer listen to the advice of the old and prudent, and again Jerusalem was rent with strife between those who wished for war and those who wished for peace. Zealots from all Judea hastened to Jerusalem to join the party of John, and under his leadership waged war upon the respectable and well-to-do, murdering respected citizens and pillaging their

houses. With overbearing insolence, they appointed Phannias, an obscure and ignorant countryman, high priest, and installed him in office with irreverent mockery. Conditions became so intolerable that when the true high priest Ananos besought the men of Jerusalem to arise and overthrow the destroyers, they rallied about him with great vigor and the Zealots were compelled to retreat to the temple. For a few days, only the conscientious scruples of Ananos who refused to desecrate the inner courts of the temple by shedding blood, stood between John and destruction. Then aid came from Idumea whither the Zealots had sent for help. Twenty thousand wild marauding semi-Jews marched upon Jerusalem and obtained entrance to the city under cover of a heavy storm. A reign of horror as dreadful in its atrocities as the most shocking period of the French Revolution commenced with their arrival. The high priests, Ananos and Jesus, were killed; citizens of ordinary rank were openly murdered while those of higher rank were subjected to the most horrible torture in the hope that they might thus be induced to join the insurgents. Men and women dared not mourn for their dead or even give them a decent burial. At length, Idumeans and Zealots alike tired of butchery and plunder; and as an innovation, instituted a mock court.

Seventy prominent citizens were summoned to judge the wealthy and respected Zacharias. When the judges braved the anger of the marauders by acquitting the prisoner, two Zealots leaped upon him and slew him, crying "Here hast thou also our verdict."

Surfeited with rapine and slaughter, and convinced that they had been deceived by the Zealots whose request for help had been wrapped in a "cloak of patriotism," the Idumeans finally took their departure; but their absence brought no relief to the unhappy city. The aristocratic party was so weakened by losses that it was no longer able to oppose the Zealots, who now indulged in shocking excesses of every sort. Violence and cruelty increased; respectable citizens deserted in such large numbers to the Romans that guards were stationed by every passage from the city to intercept and cut down fugitives; and while Jerusalem daily suffered fresh horrors, the Sicarii of Masada were sweeping through Palestine in search of food, leaving behind them a trail of desolation, cities in ashes and fields trampled and laid waste.

In the meantime, Vespasian watched from without, the suicidal course of the city, awaiting with complacency the time when self-inflicted wounds should make it his easy prey. The east, the south and the west had fallen before him.

He was preparing for the siege of Jerusalem when Nero died, and for a year he was obliged to await the order of the new emperor. In 69 A. D., he was himself proclaimed emperor by his soldiers and went to Rome to claim his title, leaving the war in the hands of his son Titus.

While Vespasian and his troops rested, there was no rest for Jerusalem. In Simon bar Giora, a leader of the Sicarii, John had encountered a rival as savage and unscrupulous as himself. Simon's presence outside the walls of the city suggested to the conservative party the "desperate expedient of driving out the devil by Beelzebub." An embassy from Jerusalem begged Simon to come to the relief of the oppressed city; and in April 69 A. D., he entered amidst the enthusiastic applause of its citizens who welcomed him as their savior and preserver. And now Jerusalem bore a double burden of despotism, for neither tyrant was able to overcome the other, and the rule of Simon was as barbarous as that of John. The latter was driven to the Temple Mount which he held until even his own men found his tyranny unendurable and a part of them mutinied under a third leader Eleazar, who took possession of the temple proper. Continual warfare raged among the three factions and in their rivalry, they foolishly burned great stores of grain which should have preserved Jerusalem

from famine in time of siege. When the week of the passover arrived, John's soldiers entered the inner temple disguised as pilgrims and in the hand-to-hand fight which followed, Eleazar's party was annihilated and Jerusalem was again at the mercy of Simon and John.

In the spring of 70 A. D., while the temple was resonant with the din of civil strife, Titus had marched upon Jerusalem and stood with his Roman legions before its walls. Three times already he had faced the violent Jewish sorties with which he was to become familiar and had narrowly escaped capture and defeat. The vehemence of these dashing sallies banished all hope of taking the city by storm. The Romans must break down the walls with their battering-rams and push their way inch by inch toward the heart of the city. The difficulty of the undertaking was increased by the location of Jerusalem and its massive fortifications. The city was built upon two hills. On the large western hill lay the Upper City; on the small eastern hill the Lower City sometimes called the Acra. North of the Acra was the temple mount, itself a fortress of tremendous strength, flanked on the northern side by the fortress Antonia. On the west, south, and east, the walls which surrounded the city stood on the edge of steep precipices; and on the

north where the ground was low, three successive walls prevented the entrance of the enemy. It was before the outer of these walls that Titus stationed his army and erected his battering-rams.

For fifteen days the engines hurled their projectiles against the outer wall before a breach was effected through which it was possible to enter. Five more days elapsed before the second wall yielded, and for four more the Jews covered the opening with their bodies. Then the Romans forced an entrance and captured the suburb which lay beyond it. Already the city's store of food was nearly spent and famine and starvation had become the companions of murder and rapine. The common danger had made Simon and John allies and to procure necessary food for themselves, their soldiers ransacked the houses of private citizens and by awful torture, compelled them to reveal the hiding-place of their last handful of meal or their last loaf of bread. Rather than endure the dangers and privations of the city, men and woman ventured in large numbers outside its walls; but flight brought them no cessation of horror, for deserters were captured, tortured, and crucified by the Romans. When Titus could not obtain sufficient wood for crosses, the hands of the fugitives were cut off and they were driven back into

the city to become the victims of Simon and John who were always ready to hunt down friends of Rome.

Still there was no thought of yielding when Josephus was sent by Titus to offer the famine-stricken city terms of surrender, and the Romans began to erect ramparts against the third and last wall which barred them from the Lower City. Seventeen days of hard labor had been consumed in the preparation of the four earth-works, two of which were levelled against the fortress Antonia and two against the walls of the Lower City. They were almost completed when with tremendous clatter, they collapsed and burst into flames, a catastrophe cunningly managed by Simon and John who had undermined them and arranged beneath them an unsubstantial foundation of crossed beams which they daubed with pitch and bitumen and set on fire. The event was a critical one for both Jews and Romans. To procure wood for the earth-works, the country had been stripped of timber for miles around. It would be difficult to obtain material for rebuilding them; but without ramparts, it was impossible to level the wall. If they should be destroyed a second time, the siege must fail. A council of war was held and the Roman commanders decided that their reconstruction would at present be attended by too great risks.

Famine must be allowed to carry on the work of destruction and with incredible speed the Roman soldiers built a stone wall around the entire city, the vigilance of whose thirteen watch-towers none might escape. For two and one-half months famine did its ghastly work. According to Josephus, 115,880 corpses were carried out of one gate of the city in the period from April 14 to July 1; and many others were cast down from the walls into ravines beneath by relatives of the deceased. Now John ventured for the first time to distribute the sacred wine and oil among the sufferers and the hard heart of Titus was touched. The Romans were permitted to receive and care for starving refugees before they were sold into slavery. It was unfortunately discovered that one of these poor creatures had swallowed his last possession, a few pieces of gold, and in one night the greedy Roman soldiers cut up two thousand of his unhappy comrades. Titus learned of the outrage and forbade it, but was unable to prevent its continuance.

In July the wearisome task of erecting ramparts was again undertaken by the Roman soldiers. The wood required for their construction had to be conveyed ten miles and twenty-one days of hard labor were spent in their erection. When they were completed, the Jews were so weakened by famine that they were unable to offer vigorous

opposition; and a sally conducted by John was more easily repulsed than former sorties of the same character. On the second of July the wall fell, but the Romans scaled it only to discover that the indefatigable John had erected another behind it. After repeated attempts, the Romans scaled this temporary wall and endeavored to take the temple by storm, but were so violently repulsed that they could hold only the Lower City and the fortress Antonia which they soon razed to the ground. Although wood must be brought a distance of twelve miles, ramparts were again constructed and the battering-ram again did its dismal work; but the foundations of the temple stood firm. Some other method of forcing an entrance must be pursued and at the command of Titus, his soldiers set fire to the great gates. The fire spread to the cloisters and continued for two days. The safety of the temple was threatened before Titus ordered his men to quench the flames, a difficult task on account of the irritating attacks to which they were constantly exposed. Finally in a fit of exasperation, a soldier plucked a brand from the burning corridor and tossed it into the temple proper. Soldier after soldier followed his example and Titus, who was unable to restore order, had barely time to rescue the sacred vessels and enter the Holy of the Holies.

Then fire and sword did their dreadful work and the pride of Israel went down in flames. Upon the smoking ashes of the sanctuary long sacred to Jehovah, the Romans soldiers offered a sacrifice to Jupiter Capitolinus and saluted their commander as imperator. In the days which followed women and children, young and old, priests and people, became the victims of the conquerors; and the prominent buildings of the Lower City were set on fire at the command of Titus. In the meantime John and Simon, who had escaped to the Upper City, were robbing the emaciated survivors of their few remaining possessions. They refused to surrender and another siege must be undertaken before the Roman conquest of Jerusalem was complete. This last pathetic stronghold of the Jews, now a city of the dead, soon fell; and the few who had survived sword and famine were hunted down. The aged and infirm were slain and the young and strong sold into slavery. Twelve handsome young Jews were reserved to grace the triumph of Titus; and John and Simon, driven by hunger from the subterranean passages in which they had taken refuge, were also sent to Rome to march side by side in the triumphal parade.

The conquest of Herodium, Macharus and Masada, the three strongholds still in the hands of the Jews, was completed in 73 A. D. and at their

fall, the Jews as a nation, ceased to exist. The promised land was confiscated by the Roman Emperor and its inhabitants were compelled to deliver the tithes formerly used for the support of the temple to the imperial treasury. "The Capitoline Jupiter was to take the place of the God of Israel."

"Rome has long since passed away and only ruins tell us of its glory, but Israel is still, after two thousand years, what it was. It has survived all the vicissitudes of history, all the changes of ages, ever consistent, comparable in the life of nations to one of those erratic boulders, which wear out the tooth of time and mock at eternity, a strange yet imposing spectacle, a living witness of long-vanished milleniums."

But in spite of the persistence with which Israel, long before her final fall, turned her face toward the past, she had unconsciously fulfilled her destiny. Before her temple fell and her people became wanderers and outcasts upon the face of the earth, the religion of revelation which it had been her mission to protect, had been transferred to the saner and gentler hands of the early Christians. Through Christianity, her child and heir, Judaism has touched countless millions; Greek and Roman, Slav and Teuton, Goth and Celt find guidance and inspiration upon the pages of the Old Testament, the law and the prophets of the ancient Jew.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

REFERENCES

APPENDIX

PART I. THE PERSIAN PERIOD. 538-333 B. C.

CYRUS, 538 B. C.

The first return, 536 B. C.

CAMBYSES, 528 B. C.

DARIUS I, 521 B. C.

Haggai, 520 B. C.

Zechariah, 520 B. C.

Completion of the temple, 515 B. C.

XERXES I, 485 B. C.

ARTAXERXES, 464 B. C.

Malachi, 500-458(?) B. C.

Return of Ezra, 458 B. C.

Return of Nehemiah, 444 B. C.

Birthday of Judaism, Oct. 24, 444 B. C.

The Samaritan secession, 432(?) B. C.

CHAPTER I. EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Characteristics of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Babylonian Colony.

The Colony at Jerusalem.

The return of Ezra, 458 B. C.

The attempted reforms of Ezra, 458-457 B. C.

The return of Nehemiah, 444 B. C.

Work of Nehemiah.

Reading the law.

The birthday of Judaism, Oct. 24, 444 B. C.

The Samaritan secession.

REFERENCES: Haggai I, 1-15; Malachi I, II, 7-17; III, 7-10; Nehemiah I-XIII; Ezra I-X; I Esdras 8 & 9; Ecclus. XLIX, 13; II Maccabees II, 13. Josephus Ant. XI, v.

PART II. THE GREEK PERIOD. 333-160 B. C.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT. 336-323 B. C.

Kings of Egypt	Jewish High Priests	Kings of Syria
PTOLEMY I, LAGI, 323 B. C.	JADDUA, 350 B. C.	SELEUCUS I, NICA- TOR, 301 B. C.
PTOLEMY II, PHILA- DELPHUS, 285 B. C.	ONIAS I, 324 B. C.	ANTIOCHUS I, SO- TER, 280 B. C.
PTOLEMY III, EU- ERGETES I, 246 B. C.	SIMON I, THE JUST, 300 B. C.	ANTIOCHUS II, THE- OS, 261 B. C.
PTOLEMY IV, PHI- LOPATOR, 221 B. C.	ELEAZAR, 242 B. C.	SELEUCUS II, 246 B. C.
PTOLEMY V, EPIPH- ANES, 204 B. C.	MANASSEH, 260 B. C.	SELEUCUS III, 227 B. C.
PTOLEMY VI, PHI- LOMETOR, 181 B. C.	ONIAS II, 233 B. C.	ANTIOCHUS III, THE GREAT, 223 B. C.
PTOLEMY VII, PHY- SCON, 146 B. C.	SIMON II, 219 B. C.	SELEUCUS IV, PHI- LOPATOR, 187 B. C.
EUERGETES II.	ONIAS III, 195 B. C. JASON, 175 B. C.	ANTIOCHUS IV, EPI- PHANES, 176 B. C.

CHAPTER II. THE ORIGIN OF HELLENISM

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Alexander the Great (reigned from 336 to 323 B. C.)

His conquest of Syria, 333 B. C.

His legendary meeting with the high priest.

His plan for Hellenising the East.

Founding of Alexandria, 332 B. C.

Socrates, 470-399 B. C.

His life and philosophy.

The philosophy of Epicurus, 337-270 B. C.

REFERENCES: Daniel II, 39-40; VIII, 5-7, XXI; I Maccabees, I, 1-5; Josephus Ant. XI, VIII.

CHAPTER III. PALESTINE TRIBUTARY TO THE PTOLEMIES. 301-198 B. C.

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Prosperity of the Jews.

Jews in Alexandria.

The progress of Hellenism.

The synagogue and the yearly tribute.

Power and character of the high priests.

Simon II, 219 B. C.

Hellenism in literature.

The Septuagint commenced, 285-247 B. C.

Ecclesiasticus, 200 B. C. (?)

Ecclesiastes, 200 B. C. (?)

Wisdom of Solomon, between 150 and 100
B. C.(?)

REFERENCES: Daniel VIII, 8, 21-22; Dan. XI, 4-20; Ecclesiasticus 50; Josephus Ant. XII, 1-IV, III Maccabees.

Compare Ecclesiasticus XXVIII, 12-24 with James I, 1-13.

" " XXVIII, 1-6 " Matt. VI, 12-15.

" " XI, 18-19 " Luke XII, 16-21.

" " XXI, 10 " Matt. VII, 13.

" Wisdom VII, 23-29 " John I, 1-12.

CHAPTER IV. THE PERSECUTION

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Palestine tributary to the Seleucids, 198 B. C.

The accession of Antiochus Epiphanes, 176 B. C.

The attack upon the temple treasury.

The high priest Onias (died 172 B. C.)

A Jewish temple in Egypt, 160 B. C.

Treachery of Jason and Menelaus.

The persecution, 170-168 B. C.

The revolt under Mattathias Maccabeus, 168 B. C.

Death of Mattathias, 167 B. C.

The book of Daniel (appeared about 166 B. C.)

REFERENCES: Daniel VIII, 9-14, 23-26; XI, 21-45;

Psalms XLIV, LXXIV, LXXIX, LXXXIII*; I Maccabees I,

* The dates of individual psalms is a difficult and much discussed question. Cheyne assigns twenty-five psalms to the Maccabean period, Hitzig and Olhausen all the psalms from 73-150. A larger number of scholars believe that the number of Maccabean Psalms cannot be large and claim internal evidence for Psalms 44, 74 and 79, sometimes adding Psalms 60, 83 and 118.

10-64; II, 1-70; II Maccabees, I, 7-8; III-VII; Josephus Ant. XII, v-vi; IV Maccabees.

CHAPTER V. JUDAS MACCABEUS

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Character of Judas Maccabeus.

His first victories.

Samaria, Bethhoron, and Emmaus, 166 B. C.

Bethzur, 165 B. C.

Rededication of the temple and the feast of the dedication, 165 B. C.

Campaign against the surrounding small nations, 164 B. C.

Battle of Bethzachariah.

Lysias and Demetrius, B. C. 163-162.

Treaty with Rome, 162 B. C.

Second battle of Bethhoron or Adasar, 161 B. C.

Battle of Eleasa and death of Judas, 161 B. C.

Judas and Hellenism.

REFERENCES: I Maccabees, 3-9, 1-22; II Maccabees, 8-15; Josephus Ant. XII, vii-xi.

PART III. THE ROMAN PERIOD.

160 B. C.—70 A. D.

Roman Leaders

SCIPIO AFRICANUS II, 148 B. C.
 THE GRACCHI, 133–121 B. C.
 MARIUS, 108–86 B. C.
 SULLA, 87–78 B. C.
 CICERO, 63 B. C.
 POMPEY, 70–48 B. C.
 The First Triumvirate, POMPEY, CRASSUS & CÆSAR, 60 B. C.
 CÆSAR, IMPERATOR, 46–44 B. C.
 The Second Triumvirate, OCTAVIUS, ANTONIUS & LEPIDUS, 43 B. C.
 OCTAVIUS AUGUSTUS, Emperor, 31 B. C. to 14 A. D.

Rulers of the Jews

JONATHAN MACCABEUS, 160–143 B. C.
 SIMON MACCABEUS, 143–135 B. C.
 JOHN HYRCANUS, 135–106 B. C.
 ARISTOBULUS I, 106–105 B. C.
 ALEXANDER JANNÆUS, 105–76 B. C.
 ALEXANDRA, 76–67 B. C.
 RIVALRY of HYRCANUS and ARISTOBULUS II, 67–63 B. C.
 (HYRCANUS II, High Priest 63–40 B. C.
 ANTIPATER, ruler, 63–43 B. C.
 HEROD and PHASAEL, tetrachs, 43–40 B. C.
 ANTIGONUS, 40–37 B. C.
 HEROD, 37–4 B. C.

Kings of Syria

ANTIOCHUS V, EUPATOR, 164 B. C.
 DEMETRIUS I, SOTER, 162 B. C.
 ALEXANDER BALAS, 150 B. C.
 DEMETRIUS II, NICATOR, first reign 145–140 B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS VI, DIONYSUS, 145–143 B. C.
 TRYPHON, usurper, 143 B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS VII, SIDETES, 138 B. C.
 DEMETRIUS II, second reign, 129–126 B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS VIII, GRYPUS, 126 B. C.

SELEUCUS V, 126 B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS IX, CYZICENUS, 116–95 B. C.
 SELEUCUS VI, EPIPHANES NICATOR, 96–95, B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS X, EUSEBES, 95–83 (?) B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS XI, EPIPHANES PHILADELPHUS, 95 B. C.
 PHILIP I, 95–83 B. C.
 DEMETRIUS III, EUKAIROS, 95–88 B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS XII, DIONYSUS EPIPHANES, 86–80 (?) B. C.
 ANTIOCHUS XIII, ASIATICUS, 69–65 B. C.
 PHILIP, II

Syria invaded by TIGRANES, the Parthian, 83 B. C.
 Syria conquered by POMPEY, 64 B. C.

CHAPTER VI. PALESTINE, AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM

OUTLINE SUMMARY

The ascendancy of Jonathan Maccabeus, 160-143 B. C.

His relations with Rome and with Syria.

Simon Maccabeus, 143-135 B. C.

Office of high priest and king vested in one person.

Destruction of the Syrian garrison, 142 B. C.

Renewal of the treaty with Rome.

John Hyrcanus, 135-106 B. C.

His conquests of the Moabites, the Samaritans and the Edomites.

The Jews and the Samaritans.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees, 109 B. C.

Decadence of the Asmonean Monarchs.

Aristobulus I, 106-105 B. C.

Alexander Jannaeus, 105-76 B. C.

Queen Alexandra, 76-67 B. C.

REFERENCES: I Maccabees ix, 23-16; Josephus Ant. XIII, i-xvi; The Jews and the Samaritans, Ezra iv; Nehemiah iv; Luke ix, 52-56; John iv, 9; Luke x, 30-37; xvii, 15-17.

Josephus Ant. IX, xiv, 3; X, ix; XI, viii, 6 & 7; XIII, ix, i.

CHAPTER VII. THE RIVAL CLAIMANTS FOR THE JEWISH THRONE

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Characteristics of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus II.

Aristobulus II seizes the kingdom, 67 B. C.

Influence of Antipater.

Civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus II, 67 to
63 B. C.

Intervention of Pompey, 63 B. C.

Siege and capture of Jerusalem, 63 B. C.

Loss of Jewish independence, 63 B. C.

Captivity of Aristobulus II.

First Jewish settlement in Rome.

Escape and insurrection of Aristobulus II and his sons,
57-55 B. C.

The proconsul Gabinius divides Judea into five parts, 57
B. C.

Antipater is made procurator of Judea, 47 B. C.

Death of Aristobulus II and his son Alexander, 49 B. C.

REFERENCES: Josephus Ant. XIV, I-VIII.

CHAPTER VIII. HEROD THE GREAT

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Character of Herod the Great.

His trial before the Sanhedrin, 47 B. C.

Death of Cæsar, 44 B. C.

Death of Antipater, 43 B. C.

HEROD and Phaseas appointed tetrarchs of Judea,
43 B. C.

Herod's war with Antigonus and the Parthians, 42-37
B. C.

His flight to Rome.

Herod made King of the Jews by the Roman Senate, 40
B. C.

His marriage to Mariamne, 38 B. C.

Capture of Jerusalem, 37 B. C.

First years of his reign.

Death of Aristobulus III, the young high priest, 35
B. C.

Breach between Herod and Mariamne.

Execution of Mariamne, 29 B. C.

“ “ Mariamne's sons, 6 B. C.

Birth of Jesus Christ, 5(?) B. C.

Death of Herod, 4 B. C.

Policy of Herod's reign.

His public works.

The Jewish temple, begun 20 B.C.

REFERENCES: Matt. II, 1-18; Josephus Ant. XIV, IX,
XI-XVI. XV-XVII, VIII.

PART IV. DEVELOPMENTS OF THE AGE

CHAPTER IX. THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND THE TALMUD

The reverence of the Jews for the Torah.

Old Testament books grouped

The Pentateuch recognized as sacred, 432 B. C.

The Prophets recognized as sacred, 200 B. C.

Hagiographa recognized as sacred, 2nd century A. D.

The origin of the oral tradition.

The Halacha.

The Haggadah.

The Mishna completed, about 160 A. D.

The Palestinian Talmud probably completed about the last quarter of the 4th century.

The Babylonian Talmud edited 375-499 A. D. closed the beginning of the 6th century.

REFERENCES: Deut. iv, 2; vi, 6-9; Psalms xix, 7-8; cxix; John v, 39; Romans iii, 1-2.

CHAPTER X. SCHOOL AND SYNAGOGUE

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Education a necessity on account of legalism.

Traditions in regard to education.

First schools for Hebrew boys, 1st and 2nd century A. D.

Teaching the practice of the law.

The Synagogue.

Its origin.

Position, construction, and furniture.

Officials of the synagogue.

Services of the synagogue.

A Jewish sermon.

REFERENCES: Proverbs iii, 13-18; iv, 1-9; I Maccabees i, 56; Josephus Ant. XX, xi, 2. Life of Josephus Par. 2. Josephus Ant. XII, iv, 6. Psalm LXXIV, 8; Matt. iv, 23; vi, 2-5; x, 17; Luke iv, 16-20; viii, 41.

CHAPTER XI. THE ABSURDITIES OF
LEGALISM

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Sabbath observance.

Bearing a burden upon the Sabbath.

Kinds of work prohibited.

Rules for Friday evening.

Concessions.

Laws of cleanness and uncleanness.

Laws governing contact with Gentiles.

Laws governing dishes and utensils.

Laws governing water used for purification.

Laws of prayer.

Time of prayer.

Salutations during prayer.

Grace before eating.

Outward symbols of duty.

Zizith, phylacteries, and Mezuah.

Evasions of the law.

REFERENCES: Jer. vii, 1-7; Amos, v, 21-24; Matt. 6, 1-7; Mk. ii, 23-28; iii, 1-5; vii, 1-20; Luke xvii, 20-21.

CHAPTER XII. THE SCRIBES, THE PHAR-
ISEES, THE SADDUCEES, AND THE
ESSENES

OUTLINE SUMMARY

The scribes.

Their position in Jewish society.

Their recompense for services.

Scribes as legislators, judges and preachers.

Famous scribes, Hillel and Shammai, 34 B. C.

The Pharisees (first mentioned 109 B. C.).

Development of the sect.

Their ideals and beliefs.

Their fraternity.

The Sadducees (first mentioned 109 B. C.).

Their ideals and beliefs.

The difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The Essenes (existed from about 110 B. C. to 70 A. D.)

Probation of Essenes.

Communism among the Essenes.

Their daily routine.

Their integrity.

Their religious belief.

REFERENCES: II Sam. VIII, 17. I Kings IV, 3. II Kings XXII, 8. Ezra VII, 6. Jer. XXXVI, 6, 10. Matt. V, 20; XXIII, 1-36. Mark XII, 38-40. Luke V, 30-35. Luke VII, 30-50. Luke XVIII, 9-14: John III, 1-21. John VII, 50-52. Matt. XXII, 23-32; Acts XXIII, 8. John XIX, 39. Josephus Ant. XIII, 5 & 6. Josephus Ant. XVIII, 1, 2-6. Josephus' Jewish War II, VIII.

CHAPTER XIII. HELLENISM AND JUDAISM

OUTLINE SUMMARY

Hellenism in Palestine, 4 B. C.

Greek words.

- Greek architecture.
- Greek customs.
- Hellenism excluded from Jewish religion.
- The Greek Bible in Palestine.
- Judaism in Alexandria.
- Accusations against it.
- Books written to prove that the Bible contained best elements of Greek philosophy.
- Aristobulus, 175-150 B. C.
- Sibylline books, Psalms of Solomon, Book of Enoch and Book of Jubilees.
- Philo, 2 B. C.-50 A. D.
- His philosophy and works.
- The *λογος* or word.

REFERENCES: John I, 1-14; Colossians II, 8; The Wisdom of Solomon 1-19; Josephus Ant. XVIII, VIII, 1.

CHAPTER XIV. THE JEWS AND THE ROMANS

OUTLINE SUMMARY

- Relationship of the Jews and the Romans.
- The sons of Herod the Great.
- Herod Antipas (exiled 39 A. D.). Herod Archelaus (deposed 6 A. D.). Herod Philip (died 33 A. D.).
- Judea under the Roman procurators, 6-66 A. D.
- The power of the procurator.
- The zealots.
- Pontius Pilate, procurator, 26-36 A. D.
- Agrippa I, King of Judea 41-44 A. D.

Felix, 52 A.D.—60 A.D. Festus, 60–62 A.D. Albinus 62–64 A.D.

The Sicarii.

Gessius Florus, 64–66 A.D.

War against Rome, 66 A.D.

Civil strife between the war party and the peace party.

Victory over Cestius Gallus, 66 A.D.

Hostilities commenced, 67 A.D.

Subjugation of Galilee, 67 A.D.

Civil war between John of Gishcala and Ananos, the high priest.

Simon bar Giora leader of the Sicarii.

Siege of Jerusalem by Titus, 70 A.D.

The temple burned and the city destroyed, 70 A.D.

REFERENCES: Luke IX, 7–9; XIII, 31–32; XXIII, 1–26. Matt. XIV, 1–12. Acts XII, 1–7, 18–23. Matt. XXVII, 11–24. John XVIII, 28–40; XIX, 1–15. Acts XXIII, 23–35; XXIV–XXVI. Josephus Ant. XVII, IX–XIII; XVIII, XIX, XX. Josephus' Jewish War.

INDEX

INDEX

- Acra, 250
 Albinus: Roman procurator, 239, 240
 Alcimus, 77, 78, 90
 Agrippa, Herod I, 238
 Agrippa, Herod II, 242
 Alexander, Balas, 92
 Alexander the Great, 25-29, 35, 36
 Alexander, Jannæus, 105, 106
 Alexander: son of Aristobulus II, 109, 120, 121, 122
 Alexandra I, 105, 107
 Alexandra II, 133, 135, 138
 Alexandreum, 116, 121
 Alexandria: most important meeting place of the Greek and Jew, 37-40, 218-229; Septuagint translated in, 44-46
 Allegorical interpretation, 222, 225
 Amhaarez, 205
 Ananias: high priest, 244
 Ananos: high priest, 247
 Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II: his insurrection, 121; alliance with Parthians and capture of Jerusalem, 128, 130-132
 Antioch: Jews in, 50, 51
 Antiochus Epiphanes: character, 52, 53; attempt to Hellenize the Jews, 55, 56; persecution of Jews, 58-61; death, 74
 Antiochus Eupator, 74
 Antiochus VI, 92
 Antiochus Sidetes, 97, 98
 Antiochus; teacher of Cicero, 215
 Antiochus the Great, 50
 Antipater I, 110, 111, 115, 122, 126, 127
 Antipater: son of Herod the Great, 128, 139
 Antonia: castle or fortress, 235, 250, 252, 254
 Apocrypha: character of, 2, 3; admitted to the Septuagint, 46; two books of, 46, 47, 48; attitude of Jews toward, 217
 Apollonius, 59, 67
 Aretas: Arabian chief, 111, 113
 Aristæas, 221
 Aristobulus I, 104, 105
 Aristobulus II: seizes the kingdom, 109; deposed and conquered by Pompey, 113-120; leads an insurrection, 121; is poisoned, 122
 Aristobulus III, 133, 134
 Aristobulus: author, 221, 223
 Architecture, 124, 143-149, 215
 Aristotle, 35, 218, 224
 Arithmetic: taught in Jewish schools, 168, 169
 Artaxerxes, 9, 16
 Asmon: house of, 63; downhill course of, 104; devotion of Jews to, 128
 Augustus, 136, 143
 Avaran: surname of Eleazar Maccabeus, 76

- Babylon: captivity at, 11; colony in, 11, 12
 Bacchides: Nicanor's successor, 90, 91
 Baths: public, 143
 Battering-rams 74, 117, 131, 251, 254
 Bearing a burden on the Sabbath, 181, 182, 192, 193
 Bethhoron: first battle of, 67
 Bethhoron: second battle of, 80
 Bethhoron: third battle of, 245
 Bethsura: battle of, 71
 Bethzacharias: battle of, 75, 76
 Bethzur, 73, 75, 77
 Birthday: of Judaism, 19
 Brigands in Galilee, 125, 131
 Books: sacred—See Scrolls

 Cæsar, 121, 122
 Cæsarea, 144, 234, 244
 Caligula, 238
 Canonical, 153
 Canon: Old Testament, formation of, 155-157
 Captivity: See Babylon
 Cassius, 126, 127
 Cestius Gallus, 240, 242, 245
 Chaber, 205
 Chamber of Squares, 148
 Chassidim: the faithful or pious, 102, 203
 Christ: birth of, 149
 Claudius, 238
 Cleopatra, 129, 130, 133, 135, 136, 143
 Coins, 95, 102
 Colonnades of the temple, 147
 Corban, 194
 Cornelius, 117
 Court of the Gentiles, 147
 Court of the Men, 147, 148
 Court of the Priests, 147, 148
 Court of the Women, 147, 148
 Crassus, 121
 Cypros, 136, 144

 Cyrus, 11
 Daniel: book of, 27, 63; quotations from, 25, 51
 Damascus, 114
 Daphne: temple of, 57
 Demetrius I, 92
 Demetrius II, 92, 94
 Demetrius Eukairos, 106
 Dependencies: third class of Roman, 233
 Dispersion, 38, 218, 120
 Divorce, 13, 15, 194
 Dok, 97
 Doris, 128

 Ecclesiastes, 47, 48, 156, 157
 Ecclesiasticus, 42-44, 46, 47
 Edom: See Idumea
 Education, 166-169
 Eighteen: benedictions, see Shemoneh Esreh
 Elders of the synagogue, 174
 Eleasa: battle of, 81, 90
 Eleazar Maccabeus, 76
 Eleazar: a martyr, 62
 Eleazar: a Pharisee, 104
 Eleazar: leader of war party, 244
 Eleazar: leader in war against Rome, 249
 Eliashib, 20
 Emmaus: battle of, 68-70
 Enoch: book of, 224
 Ensigns: See Images
 Epicurus, 35
 Essenes, 208-212
 Esther: book of, 157
 Ezra: character of, 9-11; return of, 14; attempted reform of, 14-16; reading the law, 18, 19

 Feast days, 169, 170, 179, 234
 Feast of dedication, 72, 73
 Feast of Hercules, 56

- Feast of tabernacles, 19, 93, 105, 106, 170
 Felix: Roman procurator, 239
 Florus: Roman procurator, 240-242
 Galilee, 125, 131, 245, 246
 Games: public, 56, 215
 Garrison: Syrian in Jerusalem, 59, 73, 77, 93, 94, 95
 Gates of temple, 148, 230, 231
 Gazara, 93
 Gemara, 162
 Genesis: commentary on, 225
 Gerousia, 41
 Gishcala, 246
 Gorgias, 68, 69
 Grace: before eating, 190
 Greek: culture See Hellenism
 Greek: language, 39, 40, 216.
 Gymnasiums, 56, 143
 Haggadah, 160, 161
 Haggai, 13
 Halacha, 158-161
 Hananiel, 133
 Hazan, 173, 175
 Healing: on the Sabbath, 185
 Heliopolis, 57
 Heliodorus, 54
 Hellenism: origin of, 28, 29; progress of, 39, 40, 51; checked by persecution, 61; Judas Maccabeus' attitude toward, 82-84; history of 213-229
 Hellenists, 55, 218
 Herod Agrippa I: See Agrippa I
 Herod Agrippa II: See Agrippa II
 Herod Antipas, 232
 Herod Archelaus, 232, 233
 Herod Philip, 232
 Herod "The Great" character, 123-125; trial before Sanhedrin, 125, 126; marriage, 128, 131, 134-137; war with Antigonus, 129-132; policy of reign, 141-143; public works, 143-149
 Herodium, 129, 144, 145
 Hesiod, 223
 "Hidden": books See Apocrypha
 High priest, 41, 42, 102, 119, 206
 Hillel, 201, 202
 Historical: books of Old Testament, 155
 Holy of Holies, 118, 119, 149
 Holy Place, 148, 149
 Hyrcanus I: See John Hyrcanus
 Hyrcanus II, 108, 109, 115, 117, 119, 122, 125, 126, 129, 131, 132, 135
 Idumea (or Edom), 73, 74, 99, 110, 247, 248
 Images, 216, 235, 236, 237, 238
 Immortality: Jewish belief in, 47, 48, 83, 203, 207, 228
 Interpretation of the law, 158-163
 Island of Pharos, 45
 Isopoity, 38
 Issus, 26
 Jaddua, 27
 Jason, 55-58
 Jericho, 134, 136, 143
 Jerusalem: rebuilt, 12, 13; plundered, 38, 59; walls razed, 77; besieged by Aretas, 111, 112; besieged by Pompey, 116-119; captured by the Parthians, 129; recaptured by Herod the Great, 131; besieged, captured and destroyed by the Romans, 243-255
 Jesus: the son of Sirach, 46
 Jesus: high priest, 247

- John Hyrcanus, 97-99, 101-104
Jonathan Maccabeus, 74, 90-93
Joseph: brother of Herod the Great, 130
Joseph: uncle of Herod the Great, 135, 136
John of Gishcala, 246, 249-252, 253, 255
Jubilees, Book of, 224
Judas Maccabeus: his character, 66, 67; victories, 67-71, 73, 80; restoration of the temple, 71, 72; defeat and death, 81, 82; attitude toward Hellenism, 82-84
Judea, 93, 94, 119, 233
Judges: scribes as, 200
Law, the, 153-164; evasions of, 193-195
Laws of cleanness and uncleanness, 186-188
Laws of prayer, 188-190
Laws of the Sabbath, 181-185
Lawyers, See scribes
Legalism, 4, 5, 71, 96, 180, 192
Legislators: scribes as, 200
Literary honor, 223
Logos or word, 227, 229
Lower City, 250, 252
Lysias, 68, 71, 74, 77
Maccabean Psalms, 260
Maccabees I, 68, 95
Maccabees II, 54, 55, 62
Maccabees IV, 221
Maccabeus, 67
Macharus, 255
Magnesia: battle of, 53
Malichus, 127
Manasseh, 21
Marriages: mixed, 14-16, 21
Mariamne, 128, 131, 134-137, 140, 141
Mark Antony, 127, 130, 132, 135
Martyrs, 62, 63
Masada, 130, 131, 255
Massacres, 58, 59, 106, 117, 244, 245
Menelaus, 55-59
Menzuzah, 191
Migilloth, or Rolls, 155
Minister, See Hazan
Moabites, 73, 99
Modin, 63, 65, 82, 93
Moses, 154, 158, 160, 166, 220, 222, 224
Mount Gerizim, 21, 101
Nabii or prophets, 155
Neapolitanus, 242
Neeman, 204
Nehemiah: character of, 9, 10; return of, 16; building the walls of Jerusalem, 16-18; organization of Jews, 19, 20; later reforms, 20, 21
Nicolaus, 124
Nicaso, 21
Nicanor, 68, 78-80
Nicanor's gate, 80, 148, 231
Nicanor's day, 80
Octavius, 130
Onias, III, 57
Onias IV, 57
Onias: a priest, 111, 112
Oral tradition, 158-164, 180-190, 207
Orpheus, 223
Papyryon: battle of, 113
Parmenio, 27
Passover, 112, 240
Pentateuch, 154, 155; commentary on, 222
Persecution, the, 58-68
Phannias, 247
Phasaël, 127, 129, 130
Phasaëlis, 144

- Pharisees, 102-106, 202-205
 Pharsalia: battle of, 122
 Philip, 77
 Phylacteries or tephillin, 191
 Plato, 35, 220, 222, 224, 227
 Pompey, 112-120, 121-122
 Prayer, 20, 80; laws of, 188-190
 Prophets (or Nabii), 155, 156
 Psalter of Solomon, 224
 Ptolmais, 93
 Ptolmais, the grammarian, 215
 Ptolemy: commandant of Dok, 97, 98
 Ptolemy, Euergetes, 42, 46
 Ptolemy, Lagus, 37, 42
 Ptolemy, Philadelphus, 44, 46
- Rabi, Jehudah, 161, 162
 Rabbis, See Scribes
 Reading: taught in Jewish schools, 168, 169; knowledge of, 166
 Receiver of alms, 175
 Robe of the high priest, 27, 133, 235
 Rome, 50, 53, 59; treaties with, 81, 89, 96; conquest of Judea by, 112-122; influence in reign of Herod the Great, 126, 127, 130-132, 135, 136, 143, 230, 231; in reign of Herod's sons, 232; Judea governed by, 233-242; Judea's war with, 243-254; Jerusalem burned by, 254-256
- Sabbath: observance, 19, 20, 60, 61, 64, 117, 131; laws of, 181-185, 192-194, 234
 Sabbatical year, 19, 28, 61, 76, 98
 Sacrifice, 14, 27, 56, 60, 61, 63, 112, 243, 255
 Sadducees, 102-104, 206-208
 Salome, 136
 Salutations, 189, 190
- Samaria, 26, 67, 74, 99, 131, 138, 139, 143
 Samaritans, 21, 26-28, 99-101
 Sanballat the Horonite, 17, 21
 Sanhedrin, 41, 125, 126, 200, 204, 234
 Scaurus, 113
 Schools: elementary, 166-169; Rabbinical, 12, 158, 169, 199-201
 Scribes, 9, 18, 145, 196-202
 Scrolls, 18, 19, 60, 61, 159, 160, 173
 Sebaste, 143
 Seleucus, 37
 Seleucus IV, 53
 Semi-Jew, see Idumea
 Septuagint, 44-46, 216, 217
 Sermon: a Jewish, 176-178
 Seron, 67, 68
 Sextus Cæsar, 126
 Shammai, 126, 201, 202
 Shechem, 99
 Shema, 175, 176, 179, 191
 Shemoneh Esreh, 19, 179
 Sicarii, 239, 249
 Simon II, 42-44
 Simon bar Giora, 249, 250, 251-255
 Simon ben Shetach, 107, 167
 Simon Maccabeus, 65, 82, 94-97
 Socrates, 29-35, 220, 222
 Song of Solomon, 157
 Sophroniscus, 29
 Sophists, 31
 Sosius, 131
 Stoics, 224, 226, 227
 Straton's Tower, 144
 Sybilline oracles, 30, 223, 224
 Synagogue, 20, 170-179
- Talmud, 162-164
 Taxes, 50, 51, 53, 94, 121, 236
 Temple, 13, 42-44, 60, 61, 71-73, 79, 145-149, 230, 235, 241, 254

- Temple: Mount, 73, 111, 117,
 131, 146, 250, 254
 Tetrach, 128
 Theodorus: tutor of Tiberias,
 215
 Tiberias, 237
 Tithes, 13, 19, 20, 206
 Titus, 249, 250, 252, 253-255
 Tobiah the Ammonite, 17, 20
 Torah, See Law
 Treasury: temple, 41, 54, 121,
 235, 241
 Treaties, See Rome
 Tribute, 28, 40, 41, 94, 98, 119
 Triumphs: Roman, 119, 255
 Trypho, 93
 Upper City, 250, 255
 Vespasian, 245, 248, 249
 Walls of Jerusalem, 16-18, 42,
 77, 251-254
 Wisdom of Solomon, 46, 48,
 221
 Work: prohibited on Sabbath,
 182
 Worship: private, 179
 Worship: emperor, 219, 234,
 238
 Word, See Logos
 Writing: taught in Jewish
 schools, 169
 Zacharias, 248
 Zealots, 236, 246-248
 Zechariah, 13
 Zizith, 191

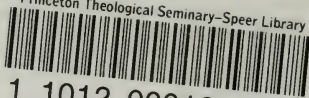
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